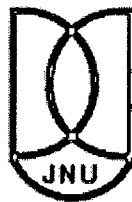


# **SIGNIFICANCE OF PRESS IN GANDHI'S RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Significance of Press in Gandhi’s Resistance Movement in South Africa**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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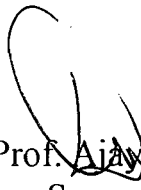
**CERTIFICATE**

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

  
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*I take up the entire responsibility of omissions and imperfections in the work, if any.*

*Jigyasa*  
*Jigyasa Meena*

*When news and freedom become synonymous then news is more than printed sheets of paper, more than accounts of events, and more than an immediate report of what is happening. The free and unhampered printing and distribution of news provides a forum in which truth may become clear.*

(Bradley,1968:3)

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## *P*reface

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*Press* is a crucial and indispensable organ in a resistance movement. It is difficult to conceive protest politics without positioning print media as an important tool in its functioning frame. Gandhi's movement in South Africa was conceptualized, introduced and mobilized through the efficacy and eloquence of the press.

The present study attempts to locate *press* as a *potent tool* in determining the socio-political transformations during Gandhi's resistance movement in South Africa. The emphasis of the research is on the evolution of the *protest journalism* in South Africa, focusing on the Indian community and the emergent leadership of M. K. Gandhi and his political mouthpiece, *Indian Opinion*, pioneering their struggle for respectful existence in South Africa. It assesses the significance of print media in Gandhi's political activism in the context of the emerging print culture in South Africa

The *first* chapter introduces the theoretical and conceptual framework in exploring the role and significance of press in Gandhi's resistance movement in South Africa. It examines the relationship between press and protest, and contextualizes it in the historical background. The *second* chapter focuses on the analyses of the upright leadership of M.K. Gandhi and his dexterous and eloquent use of his newspaper, *Indian Opinion* for organizing and mobilizing the Indian community. The *third* chapter gives an overview of the role and perception of the other contemporary press during the movement, regarding the Indian question and politics in the context of Gandhi's political campaign. The *fourth* chapter puts forth the assessment of the interface of the press and protest in Gandhi's resistance movement and its consequential outcomes. It aims at the appraisal of the role and impact of the relationship between the press and the resistance movement and how some of his *key concepts* and *ideals* developed during Gandhian era in South Africa. The *fifth* chapter summarizes and advances the concluding analysis of the work.

## *C*onceptualizing Context: Theory and History

*“The Media are a ‘power resource’ in terms of exerting influence in society; they are a ‘location’ where public affairs are played out; they are a ‘source’ of varied definitions of social reality, changing culture and values; and most importantly, they are a source of the ‘public meaning system’ which signals the public definition ‘normality’ and ‘deviance’ in society.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **1.1 Introduction**

The role of Mass Media has been revolutionary in manoeuvring and shaping the socio-political structures of the societal frame in the modern times. It is a *potent tool* that can be of tremendous good or unmitigated evil, depending on its use. Press or print culture has been instrumental in *political socialization* in societies especially menaced by ‘political instability’ and ‘social disequilibrium’. Then this culture has a major role to play. It has to bear the burden of the government in such tasks as forging the emotional and national integration of the country, of hastening its political evolution and prodding the people to lend their shoulder to the wheel of economic development.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the potential of print media, in the process of nation building, social change and political development is worth the emphasis.

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<sup>1</sup> D. McQuail(1994) , “Mass Media in the Public Interest : Towards a Framework of Norms for Media Performance “, in J. Curren, M. Gurevitch and J. Wootacott (eds), *Media Communication and Society*, London: Edward Arnold.,p.1

<sup>2</sup>D.R. Mankekar (1973), *The Press under Pressure*, New Delhi: Indian Book Company, p.14.

Print Media, '*the mother of nationalism*' as Benedict Anderson calls it, among other means of mass communication, has a forceful impact and influence on the societal recipients as it conveys a large quantity of messages, characterized by 'greater depth coverage', 'full detail', and 'broader perspective' and richer background information being more educative and knowledgeable compared to the 'ahistorical and abbreviated broadcast content.'<sup>3</sup> Its impact becomes more forceful in societies where media was as such in its nascent and evolving phase.

The relationship, thus, evolved between the media and society shape the environs in a consequential manner. Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication. The mechanics of the social and cultural processes and changes can be well comprehended through the knowledge of the working of media in the society. Media works in a determining way by altering the environment that evokes in us unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act, and the way we perceive the world.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the study of media as an important social segment is an imperative for historical construction and its comprehension.

## **1.2 The Theoretical Frame**

The theoretical and analytical frame attempts to select and facilitates through the corpus of ideas and theories the media understanding and research that provide comprehensible conceptions to it. Major theoretical ideas related to media research have been broadly classified as 'media-centered views' and 'society-centered views', the former presents media as a force for change either through technological innovation or as the typical content carrier, whereas the later holds it as a product of historical change that forms one of the components of society.

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<sup>3</sup>Gina M. Garramone and Charles K. Alkin (1986), "Mass Communication and Political Socialization: Specifying the Effects, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50(1): 76-86; Jeffrey J. Mondak, (1995) "Newspapers and Political Awareness", *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(2): 513-527.

<sup>4</sup> Marshal McLuhan and F. Quentin (1967), *Medium is the Message*, Harmonis Worth, Penguin

With regard to the role and significance of media in the resistance movement, the present study appreciates the *functional approach* of the media-society theory that holds the society as a system with linked subsystems, which contribute continuity and order. It perceives social practices and institutions in terms of *needs* and *demands* of the society and individuals. Media or print media acts as one of the components that assist in organizing a complete social life and environment. Thus, it entails no assumption of ideological predilection from media but depicts it as essentially ‘self directing’ and ‘self correcting’, within certain negotiated instrumental rules and context.<sup>5</sup> The functionalists give importance to the press with regard to its role in the development of political awareness.

Further, the *social constructionism* unravels and adds to the understanding of the working mechanics of press and protest politics in the society. It visualizes the social reality as created and subject to change and alterations through human agency. Concerning mass media, it plays an influence through propaganda and ideology in conceiving reality, which reflects a selective construct of information and particular perception. It refers ‘to the processes by which events, persons, values and ideas are first defined or intercepted in a certain way and given value and priority, largely by mass media, leading to the (personal)construction of larger pictures of reality. Here, the ideas of ‘framing’ and ‘schemata’ play their part’.<sup>6</sup> The media is largely instrumental in the conception and dissemination of the societal reality to its members and outside. Identity formation is a crucial consequential product of the process.

The above discussed theoretical frame attempts to employ its analytical capacity to comprehend media participation in the Gandhian resistance movement. The mass media and its types, like the print culture, which is the focus of the study, holds a place as one of the elemental constituent of the social frame that plays an instrumental role in shaping and manoeuvring change. Here the undertaking is to position *press* as among the *potent political tool* in determining the politics and socio-political transformations in the specific

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<sup>5</sup> Denis McQuail (2005), *McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, p. 96-99

<sup>6</sup> McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*, p.101

socio-historical context. The emphasis of the research is on the evolution of the *protest journalism* in South Africa, with particular reflection on the Indian community and the emergent leadership of M.K. Gandhi and his political mouthpiece, *Indian Opinion* pioneering the struggle for assertion of their existence and identity. The functional worth of the press as a tool of *protest* and *identity construction* in the resistance movement during Gandhian era in South Africa is an issue of accentuation.

The argument does not set to demonstrate and argue that this theme can be analyzed only through the discussed frame, but proposes that the present work intends to perceive and organize the theme through it.

### ***1.2.1 Press as a Potent Political Tool***

Print culture has been positioned as a potential element in managing the manouevres of protest politics. Gandhian politics gave new dimensions to the role of press as a political tool. It did not operate simply as channel of communication but it acted as an active agent in the political and social processes that powerfully structured and engineered *change*. It facilitated the socio-cultural and political evolution of the Indian community and their perception about themselves and outside. The oppositional politics would not have been effective without the role played by these printed columns.

#### **1.2.1.1 Means of Organization, Control and Change**

Press is ‘the invention of a new literary, social and cultural form’ that has been a means to wield, control and organize the society. As the facilitator of change, the influence of media in building and transforming the society is significant. Doob<sup>7</sup> argues that the contribution of press in this sphere is quiet perceptible, especially in the African societies, in the transition of traditional societies or developing nations to a modern form. The progression of the Indian community and its politics was instrumentally organized through press. Gandhi effectively wielded influence and gained trust of the community, which made him a successful mass mobiliser and leader.

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<sup>7</sup> L. W. Doob (1961), *Communication in Africa- A Search for Boundaries*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

### **1.2.1.2 Functions and Forms**

Press is a multifarious and multifunctional mode of communication that lays a variety of functions to organize a society, according to the political and economic structures of society. Its evident functions are to inform, entertain, educate and activate the public. Lenin defined the press “as a collective agitator, propagandist and political organizer.” Mao assigned five major functions to the press; to argue, to stimulate, to encourage, to agitate, to criticize and to propel.<sup>8</sup> Among others roles, *mobilization* holds specific functional value in the development of subjugated countries and communities.

In this context, the complex and multi-sided influence of the political press in the Gandhian movement concentrated on its functioning in consolidating the Indian community as one voice and posing a powered protest, asserting their rights.

### **1.2.1.3 Political and Activist Press**

The study mainly deals with the political role of the press, and focuses on the political and activist press. Gandhi’s resistance movement was largely grounded on his press that dexterously advanced his political activism. Though, his journalism zeroed on protest politics concentrating on the tasks of activism, information and organization; he even raised issues of socio-cultural and moral importance, as all of these formed and completed his vision of reform.

## ***1.2.2 Press in Politics of Protest***

The efficacy of protest politics lies in the adroit use of its major tools and the appropriate exercise of press provides the needed strength to the movement. It bears the basic responsibilities of the society as to survive, to provide information, to offer guidance or interpretation of the news, to entertain, and to serve the public.<sup>9</sup> Gandhian Press was an indispensable pillar of his campaign. It worked as a weapon for an over all reform of the community and his oppositional politics.

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Manu Bhaskar (1989), *Press and Working Class Consciousness in Developing Societies*, New Delhi: Gian Publishing House., p.7

<sup>9</sup> Duane Bradley(1968), *The Newspaper: Its Place in a Democracy*, New Delhi

### **1.2.2.1 Role and Significance**

The sizeable association between the magnitude of media development and change is well documented in the mass politics. It relates the multitudes to the “infinite vicarious universe” and as a consequence, functions as a “mobility multiplier”<sup>10</sup>. The role of print media in Gandhian mass politics was not just confined to disseminate knowledge, but also to evolve as the medium of comprehension such as to make a strong basis for developing public opinion that the colonial government could not ignore. The essentiality of a newspaper in the struggle was an utmost concern for Gandhi. Despite being a ‘financial burden’ and a time consuming task, Gandhi was determined to continue it as it was the major weapon of his political activism. The strain on his finances was evident through his letter to Gopal Krishna Gokhale, where he wrote, “I placed at his service the bulk of my services...I have already become responsible to the extent of nearly £3,500.”<sup>11</sup>; and even on his time as he “had to bear the brunt of the work, having for most of the time to be practically in charge of the journal.”<sup>12</sup>

### **1.2.2.2 Carrier of Information and Opinion**

Journalism was instrumentally employed by Gandhi to acquaint the Indian community in South Africa with the political happenings, the actions and measures of government and their explications; and to the Europeans with their grievances. It developed consciousness and awareness among the masses and worked in restoring the prestige of Indians and elimination of the bias of South African White Intelligentsia.

### **1.2.2.3 Formulation of Public Opinion**

The conception of public opinion in a resistance movement is among the most formative tasks which direct its furtherance. It builds a positive ground for the consensus and social action among the members of the group. The press is largely contributive for the interaction and participation in the community. The news reports expose the discrepancy between private attitude and behaviour and public morality thereby aiding public to a

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<sup>10</sup>D. Lerner (1958), *The Passing of Traditional Society*, London: Chatto and Windus.

<sup>11</sup> Letter to G.K. Gokhale, 13-1-1905, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (henceforth, *CWMG*) Vol.IV(1960),p.332

<sup>12</sup>M. K. Gandhi (1958), *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, p. 285.

decision and consent<sup>13</sup>. It facilitates attitudinal change which is essential for common collective action and mass politics.

Public opinion was formulated largely through print media in the Gandhian crusade for Indian rights. His journalistic skills brought instrumental attitudinal change that shaped the public opinion against the government and gathered support for exerting external pressures.

#### **1.2.2.4 Tool of Opposition**

Press is a crucial instrument in the oppositional politics. Gandhian political activism significantly was based on it. In the initial phase, the tone of his protest was mild with ‘moderation and calmness’, it later, developed into the voice of firm protest. Print media was dexterously used as a handy weapon for critique and exposition of the governmental actions and policies that laid the ground for the mass politics.

#### **1.2.2.5 Determinate factor in Resistance**

Press is a determining and instrumental factor in the societies which underwent socio-political upheavals and demanded development. The traditional societal functions of communication, as a ‘watchman, an aid to social decision making, and a teacher’,<sup>14</sup> decisively takes the resistance movements on a viable course.

Print media definitively organizes and manages the intricacies of mass politics as ‘the political process, in its public manifestation, reaches citizens as the product of a set of journalistic codes and practices.’<sup>15</sup> The resistance politics is based on the mass based action which needs tool for public awareness and consciousness.

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<sup>13</sup> P.F. Lazarsfeld and R. K. Merfon (1948), “Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action” in L. Bryson (ed.) *The Communication of Ideas*, New York: Harper.

<sup>14</sup> W. Schramm (1964), *Mass Media and National Development*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Brain McNair (2000), *Journalism and Democracy: An Evaluation of Political Public Sphere*, London and New York: Routledge.p.1



### ***1.2.3 Press and Protest: The Interface***

Press in a resistance movement as Gandhi constructively employed, realizes its optimum potential and protest through press as a chief tool also explicates and manoeuvres the movement to lead on a determinate trajectory. The Gandhian press managed and organised the political activism in a consequential manner. It served as an effective channel of communication between the leadership and the community which aid in consensual and mass politics.

#### **1.2.3.1 The Consequential Outcomes**

The political role of print media and its relation with *change* is crucial for national development. Gandhian press was a crucial element in the evolution of the *Indianness* that aided in building a united front. The protest politics of Indians was more the fight for dignity and self respect than political power. It facilitated fundamental transformations in the socio-political frame of the Indian community.

#### **1.2.3.2 Identity Construction**

Press had a fundamental role and impact in constructing collective Indian identity in South Africa, from a socio-cultural and political perspective. It shaped the identity that enabled people to *imagine* a connectedness on a broader than local sense, linking people who may never physically meet. It offered a participatory approach to the community and had been effectively harnessed to create an “*imagined political community*”.<sup>16</sup> It had to develop the ground on common ideals and values.

Benedict Anderson, in his landmark study *Imagined Communities*<sup>17</sup>, points to the rise of the vernacular press as a catalyst that helped to fuel the emergence of nationalist consciousness. His argument, presented in the context of a broader study of the origins and spread of nationalism, is that the advent of commercial printing provided the means, for the first time in history, through which readers could imagine a comradeship with a large number of fellow readers, most of whom they had never met nor would ever meet

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<sup>16</sup> The conception is inspired by Benedict Anderson (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso. Reprinted 1991.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

over the course of their lifetimes.<sup>18</sup> He explicates the genesis of new nationalisms as a resultant phenomenon from a process of ‘re-imagination’ initiated by the changes in the conscience through media. He perceives the possibility of ‘large anonymous socialites’ as being formed by the simultaneous experience of ‘reading the newspapers’, and recognizes that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.”<sup>19</sup> The newspapers created a medium for the sharing of experiences across a relatively distant territory. No matter that the experiences were vicarious and the sharing not exactly reciprocal, the news revealed the contours of a social world beyond the immediate experience of its readers, and reading the news made readers feel a part of that expanded social world.

The historical force of nationalism, as Anderson observes, lies foremost with this sense of belonging it instills. He explicates the proposition that more than expanding and diversifying the base of reader experience, the consumption of print supposedly restructured that experience. First, he proposes that reading changed perceptions of time. Specifically, he asserts that reading heightened awareness of the reality of co-occurrence within time and that awareness, in turn, made it possible to imagine an extended or non-local community—that is, a community moving together through time.<sup>20</sup> Second, the language of print also shaped experience. The fact that many of the papers were printed in the vernacular instilled awareness of a broader, ethnically diverse community of speakers.

Marshall McLuhan argued a similar point twenty years before Anderson when he wrote that “print, in turning the vernaculars into mass-media, or closed systems, created the uniform, centralizing forces of modern nationalism.”<sup>21</sup>

The absolute adoption of the Andersonian exposition on the genesis and dissemination of the nationalist consciousness in the subjugated colonies confronts difficulty. The

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, pp.33-46

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.6

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, p.22-33

<sup>21</sup> Marshall McLuhan (1969), *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, New York: Mentor, pp.263-266

discrepancies with the European model are bound to surface and the nationalism in these colonial settlements may be externally inspired in some parameters, they even have their own specificities. Partha Chatterjee, one of the thoughtful scholars on the subject, proposes that nationalism is less explicitly political than broadly cultural. He in his *Nationalist Thought and Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*<sup>22</sup> began an argument with Anderson, developed more extensively in *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post Colonial Histories*,<sup>23</sup> over the nature and function of nationalist thought in the decolonizing world. Chatterjee objects to the way Anderson's traces the origins of nationalism in the Europe and its passing eastward through the 'European ethno-nationalisms' to Asia and Africa. He identifies various local sources of nationalist belief and inspiration and chides Anderson for proposing that the nationalism that emerged in the colonized states around the beginning of the twentieth century is *derivative* of the various European and American nationalist movements that had begun a century or more earlier. Then, Anderson's "modular nationalism" will be a western invention and nothing is *imagined*, "If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and Americas, *who do they have left to imagine?*...Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized."<sup>24</sup> Chatterjee defends the nationalism of Asia and Africa as 'uniquely authentic' and explicates his argument developed on the dichotomy of the *domains*, the domain of "*outside*" and the "*inner*" domain. The former is the material domain where the West has established his superiority and the East has succumbed to it, whereas the spiritual, on the other hand, is the "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity and demands to be preserved. Anderson's "*print capitalism*" perceives nationalism beyond this distinction and attempt to deconstruct it. For Chatterjee, the driving force of historical nationalism in the colonized states is located in the myriad forms of resistance to European control, a resistance that is discernible only on the margins of dominant discourses but demands comprehension.

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<sup>22</sup> Partha Chatterjee (1983), *Nationalist Thought and Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*, London: Zed, Reprinted 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Partha Chatterjee(1993), *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post colonial Histories*, Princeton Princeton University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Chatterjee, *Fragments*,p.5 (emphasis added)

### ***1.2.3.2.1 Define and Represent the Community***

The Print media was instrumental in the emergence of consciousness among the Indian community's identity in South Africa. This consciousness facilitated in defining Indian identity to themselves and to the outside world. Gandhi and his use of press in the political arena were determinate in the evolution of this aspect of the Indian identity in South Africa. The press was effectively employed for the development of *Indianness* and to represent and assert the respectful existence of the community in a politically volatile society as South Africa. As Anderson assumes that a sense of belonging that is at the heart of community is created by awareness that others are simultaneously reading the same stories in the same language.<sup>25</sup>

Gandhi's politics was focused on homogenizing the heterogeneous sections and groups based on regional, religious and linguistic identities and other factors as class and caste, around the common Indian identity to pose a united stand. He was successfully persuasive in mobilizing people beyond these sectional barriers. He employed different languages representing different sections of the community to evolve a common consciousness. He introduced his newspaper with four different linguistic mediums, as *Indian Opinion* proclaimed in its first issue<sup>26</sup>, to facilitate his project evolving a converging communitarian identity with consensus for the cause. Besides English and Gujarati, Gandhi earnestly attempted to acquaint himself with Tamil<sup>27</sup> as vernaculars or the languages of the masses were essential to the people.

Gandhian politics, with regard to the evolution of the community's identity, goes beyond the Andersonian proposition explicating the role of print media or memorably his "*print capitalism*" in disseminating consciousness based on linguistic parameters or '*linguistic nationalism*' as he calls it. He argues that newspapers have historically played the role of cementing an *imagined* national community through the daily ritual of reading the paper,

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<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.35

<sup>26</sup> "This weekly newspaper is published in four languages namely English, Gujarati, Tamil and Hindi in the interests of the British Indians residing in South Africa." Quoted in S.N. Bhattacharya (1965), *Mahatma Gandhi : The Journalist*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay p. 10

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p.99. In a letter to Chhaganlal Gandhi, dated April, 17 1905, Gandhi admits: "I am studying Tamil very diligently and, if all is well, I may be able to fairly understand the Tamil articles within two months at the outside."

usually in a common national language, a vernacular acts as the binding force of the community. Gandhian political activism establishes beyond the easy generalizations and long held assumptions about the dominance of one print-language and its readership. It exhibits that press in different languages representing different communities, instead of showing diversifying tendencies, developed and bound them on common grounds.

Robin Jeffrey<sup>28</sup> analyses the role of India's thriving local-language newspaper industry in transforming fundamental notions of public interest and national identity. He goes against the grain of the classical line of thought and offers a nuanced account of an undocumented 'newspaper revolution' that has taken place in eleven scripts and at least a dozen languages across a vibrant democracy.

He makes the compelling argument that the explosion of local-language newspapers has helped to reinforce the legitimacy of the Indian state as a unified nation based on regional difference. In fact, in one of the bolder claims, he posits that the secessionist movements against the Indian nation state in the past two decades, like those in Punjab, the Northeast Provinces, and Kashmir, have taken place in regions where there was no commercially successful local-language press. He emphasizes on the evolution of press and its impact on the building of the Indian nation, and notes that the multitude of language and scripts in print has played a dramatic role in expanding the all-India public space and has not shown the extreme tendency of balkanization.

Jeffrey moves beyond Benedict Anderson's influential argument regarding the role of "*print-capitalism*" in nation-building, emphasizing the need in India for that powerful partnership to reach a mass readership in their own languages. It has helped Indians to conjure and broaden up an image of a broadly shared nationality. Attracting the custom of large populations of newly literate readers with some money to spend required the inclusion of local stories and Jeffrey suggests that such recognition in print, along with

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<sup>28</sup>Robin Jeffrey (2000), *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics, and the Indian Language Press, 1977-1999*, London: C. Hurst.

stories about the nation as a whole, enhanced a sense of citizenship and an all-India national identity.

Press enabled readers to conceive the possibility of a nation by orienting them to it, and by extending their view as it were. They gave readers the vantage points created in spaces carved out by the 'very routine of reading.'

### **1.2.3.3 Political Assertion, Opposition and Mobilization**

The role of the press has been so crucially positioned in the domain of politics that the political campaigns are even visualized as "communication phenomena".<sup>29</sup> In the Gandhian protest politics, the multi dimensional aspects of media came to fore. It was a medium of criticism of government policies and its dissemination. It acted as the guardian of the rights and liberties of the people as well as the interpreter of their ideals and aspirations. It facilitated in providing identity, voice and organization to the community.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The study attempts to position press as the *potent political tool* in determining the politics and socio-political processes in the specific socio-historical context. It historically analyses and contextualizes press and explores its relationship with the politics of protest in the Gandhian resistance movement in South Africa. The emphasis of the research is on the context of the evolution of the *protest journalism* in South Africa, focusing on the Indian community and the emergent leadership of M. K. Gandhi and his political mouthpiece, *Indian Opinion* pioneering the struggle for assertion of the existence among the Indians in South Africa. It assesses how the Indian community employed press to represent and assert its identity and respectful existence, appraising its impact in a politically volatile society as South Africa.

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<sup>29</sup> Judith S. Trent and Robert V. Friedenberg (1991), *Political Campaign Communication*, New York: Praeger.

## 1.4 Historical Context

The study endeavours to perceive and place the discussion in its societal context where the presence of print culture was not as pervasive as it is today. Nevertheless, its nascent occurrence was enough to inspire and bring this theme to study its consequential influence and impact.

### 1.4.1 Political Scenario

In the nineteenth century South Africa, the subjugated communities underwent sizeable transformations influenced by the massive changes in the country's political economy. The mineral discovery and colonial interest in mining changed the face of the country. The major colonial and industrial power, the Britain inextricably involved into the struggle for dominance and became a major wielder of power with the conquest of the Boer republics in the Anglo-Boer war between 1899 and 1902 and the incorporation of the defeated Afrikaners into the unified settler state of South Africa in 1910. The white settler government imposed a series of unjust measures to exert control and power.

This phase witnessed the inception of the politics of protest among different communities as Africans, Coloured, and Indians in the last decades of the nineteenth century. These shifts and changes saw the conception and the homogenization of these communities. Though, these communities were isolated from each other in responding to the discriminatory policies of government, but all of these '*dissent political groups*' relied primarily on 'petitionary politics' and strategies operating within limited legal and legislative colonial framework, cherishing the British trusteeship, to voice and convey their interests and grievances to the authorities.<sup>30</sup> This mode of initial campaign could not sustain itself in the advancing stages of the protest and opposition politics and brought a shift in the political activism towards a more intense and explicit approach.

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<sup>30</sup> Les Switzer (ed.), (1997), *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance 1880-1960s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.21

#### **1.4.1.1 Indian Question**

Indians first came to Natal in 1860. The British brought them as indentured labourers to quench the cheap labour demand and ameliorate the crisis that surfaced since the abolition of slavery in the continent in the nineteenth century. Once their contract got expired, these indentured labourers sought work opportunities in different fields. They were followed by streams of migrants who were mainly traders. The British soon began to visualize them as competitors in agriculture and commerce. These apprehensions and sentiments advanced and translated into arbitrary irrational legislations that severely curtailed the civil liberties of the Indians.

The political degradation and economic ruin of the South African Indians were the result of the anti-Asiatic laws enacted by the South African legislatures. The new legislations imperiled every right of Indians as citizens of British Empire. Thus, the Indians evolved a united front to confront these injustices. The anti Indian moves were also focused on some issues, for instance Indians were to be prevented from any further longer gaining of the electoral franchise. The future immigration of unindentured Indians was to be impeded. And free Indians were, in so far as possible, to be deprived of the opportunity to gain licenses to trade. The impositions of these came into the realm of their discriminatory politics.

#### ***1.4.2 Print Culture***

The print culture in the continent has played a major role in voicing and interpreting the subordinated communities to themselves and to the outside world. The press and the resistance movement developed together in South Africa. The movement leaders had the vision to realize the importance of the print media in mobilizing the masses and keeping the authorities informed of the grievances of their people, as Rev John L. Dube, the founder of the African National Congress and M. K. Gandhi, the organizer of the Natal Indian Congress resisted through their respective papers, *Inanda Base Natal* and *Indian Opinion*.



#### 1.4.2.1 Origin, Nature and Position of Political Press in South Africa

Print media first became widespread in Africa in the nineteenth century. Historically perceiving, the political function of the media has been crucial in its evolution. The colonial governments initiated the press, as they sought to control the African population by communicating to them what the rulers wanted them to know. The first newspapers in Africa were Gazettes or small official publications as the *Cape Town Gazette*, *African Advertiser*, and *Royal Gazette* etc. South Africa print media was dominated by the major news publication as *Argus*, which largely bore the imprint of the European journalism. They reflected the racist attitude of the white government, which tended to ignore black majority. These newspapers developed as commercial and professional publications, well financed by minority interests, unlike the other press, which from its beginning was designed to give expression to the growing political aspirations. There were also *missionary newspapers* that mainly emphasized and attacked the social ills and brought forth persuasive articles on the conversion to Christianity.

Press in this societal context reflected the mood of the political environs. It assumed a pivotal role in subordinated societies, as it was effectually functional in interpreting the communities to themselves and to the outside world. The indigenous newspapers in Africa were used to claim the right to be heard, to print and voice people's views and later even the right to self-government. South African Press has been characterized as 'sectional press' and race was the dominant feature of this sectionalism.<sup>31</sup>

The native African newspapers developed in the later half of the nineteenth century were not meant for radical change or total disruption of the status quo, but initially entrusted trust on the imperial authority and aimed to spread anti-colonial ideas and promote nationalism. The origin of the *black press* in South Africa is linked and commenced with the establishment of mission stations in the Eastern Cape and the work between missionaries and indigenous people. The missionaries brought literacy to black people and in the process transferred the skills and resources necessary for publishing. The first

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<sup>31</sup> Les Switzer and Donna Switzer (1979), *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho*, G.K. Hall and Co., Boston ,p. vii

newspaper intended for black readers, *Umshumayeli Wendaba* (Publisher of the News), was printed at the Wesleyan Mission Society from 1837 to 1841. The missionary education and interaction gave rise to a section of African petty bourgeoisie who were mainly responsible for the inception of the native print culture in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In South Africa, the first newspaper that came up to cater the *black* readership was *Imvo Zabantsundu* (African Opinion) launched in 1884 by John Jabavu in King William's Town both in Xhosa and English. Jabavu resigned his editorship of a missionary-owned paper, *Isigidimi Sama Xhosa* (the Xhosa Messenger), after convincing himself of the need to publish newspapers independent of missionary control. His paper was the first to be written, owned and controlled by the *black* people, advancing their political and educational interests.

With the increased momentum of the oppositional politics, the political newspapers independent of missionary control surfaced. Other black-owned newspapers that followed were associated with the establishment of political movements for blacks. The papers included *Izwi laBantu* started in 1897 by A.K.Soga; *Ilanga lase Natal* (The Natal Sun), started by John Dube in 1903; and the *Indian Opinion*, established in 1903 by Mahatma Gandhi. These publications were targeted for separate audiences as African, Coloured and Indians, but all represented, as Les Switzer remarks, '*South Africa's pioneer black press*',<sup>32</sup> originated and advanced crucially in this stage (1880-1930), characterized by 'a transition in discourse from *protest to resistance* in African politics'.<sup>33</sup>

Largely, the African continent was least endowed with indigenous news communication resources and had witnessed inhibited progress due to economic and social factors as financial constraints, illiteracy, economic structures, linguistic and ethnic diversity. This plight was directly related to its socio-historical background. It developed the African press as the by-product of European colonialism, with denied or limited access to conventional political and public news affairs. The political motives chiefly explicated the genesis and growth of the press. The Europeans used it for reinforcing and supporting

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<sup>32</sup> Switzer, *Alternative Press*, p.1

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, p.9

their political objectives, and the native press built on western models, evolved as a political instrument, an organizational tool for molding a political organization and played a momentous role in the struggle for independence. Hachten meaningfully argues that mass communications or what he calls “*muffled drums*” in Africa is both an agent and an index of social change. The media of the society irrefutably reflected and painted the true picture. Though it may be technologically, economically or politically weak, the press had played a significant role in the socio-political progression of Africa. Its limited access to educated few does not undermine its importance, as Hachten, further points, because it was this small fraction that was instrumental in shaping the African destiny<sup>34</sup>, largely organizing and controlling the politics in the region.

#### **1.4.2.2 Indian Newspapers**

Press among the Indians in South Africa developed primarily as their *mouthpiece to voice and interpret to them and to the outside world*. It played a major role in the evolution of Indians as a community asserting its existence and identity.

South Africa’s considerable Indian population, concentrated in the Natal area, had experienced a long press tradition. Journalism among Indians in South Africa, in its initial phases, was largely dominated by Gandhi. The newspapers like the *Indian Opinion* were developed, to defend the interests of the community upholding the ideas of passive resistance proposed by its owner. For the indigenous agitational press, journalism became a means to an end.

### **1.5 Biographical Insight of Gandhian Politics and Press**

The South African experience of Gandhi was the most instrumental and influential phase of his life. Judith Brown played an important role in bringing forth the significance of his South African years. Brown argued that for Gandhi, “the South African experience was a

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<sup>34</sup> William A. Hachten (1971) *Muffled Drums: The News Media in Africa*, The Iowa State University Press.

rich and formative one, moulding him into a very special kind of public figure , far greater in range and experience than most (Indian politicians) of his day.”<sup>35</sup>

### ***1.5.1 Brief profile of Gandhi and his South African politics***

Gandhi’s arrival in South Africa was marked by episodes of searing disillusionment, but these were not strong enough to shake his deeply entrenched sense of Britishness; more time and experiences were needed before it could completely awaken him.

The Natal Franchise Bill that became an Act defranchising the Indians in Natal in 1896 was his introduction to the political activism, an opportunity to learn political skills and mobilize people into united action. The disabilities and discrimination against Indians were largely due to what Gandhi himself calls as ‘trade jealousy’, which originated with prosperity of Indians in trade. It was viewed as threat to Europeans who organized a systemized prosecution through discriminatory and unjust laws of the colony.<sup>36</sup> Thus hue and cry against the Indians was first raised by the commercial classes and then taken up by the populace. The Quarantine Bill, the Trade Licenses Bill, the Immigration Bills etc. were the ‘menacing manifestations’ of trade jealousy and racial arrogance. They wanted to keep the Indians for ever “hewers of wood and drawers of water”.

Gandhi commenced the campaign against these Bills, through petitions, letters to Natal Legislature and Imperial Government, and developed his lobbying techniques. His politics centered on the interests of the Indian community and on the common claims of Indians and English to British citizenship. He acted as a representative of Indians representations on their behalf to the authorities and wrote letters to the press to expose the racial injustices. Gandhi did not limit his comments to the situation in Natal, he also discussed the difficulties being faced by Indians in Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, the South African Republic (Transvaal), and the Chartered Company's territory (Rhodesia).

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<sup>35</sup> Judith Brown (1989), *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*, New Haven: Yale University Press,p.57

<sup>36</sup> Interview to “*The Statesman*”, November 12, 1896, *CWMG*, Vol. I(1969), pp.124-127

With regard to the 'Franchise Law Amendment Bill', he opined that the real object of the Bill as perceived by the government was that, "*We do not want the Indians any more. We want the coolies, but they shall remain slaves here and go back to India as soon as they are free.*"<sup>37</sup>

The Anglo- Boer War (1899-1902) became one more occasion for Gandhi to express his abiding faith in the British Empire. He organized an Indian Ambulance Corps and placed its service at the disposal of the Natal Government. He was then proud of his British citizenship and anxious to disprove the charges frequently levelled against Indians in South Africa. His selfless services were received well and the European presses were filled with notes of praises.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, Gandhi seemed to accomplish all his tasks in South Africa with a legal career, active participation in the community's social life, defence of indentured labourers, protection of trading Indians, and service to the British in the Anglo-Boer War. After spending seven years in Natal and a sense of finalized business, he left for India, only to come back soon.

The newly formed responsible government in Natal passed a series of fresh anti-Indian acts, based on racial discrimination, and they are to be opposed. It defeated the very object of the war, which stood against the mistreatment of the subjects under the Boer regime, and the promise of better condition under British through their ameliorative measures. Now the British sense of justice was showing its other side. New measures with more intensity were laid such as a £3 poll tax was imposed on all formerly indentured Indians to inhibit the growth of a free Indian population, and enforcement of a strict licensing policy and immigration legislation that required a literary test in a European language. These issues touched the entire economic and social life of the Indians, stimulating the intense Indian political activity.

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<sup>37</sup> Extract from Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji ,5-7-1894, *CWMG*, Vol.I(1969),pp.139-140 (emphasis added)

His presence was soon demanded and he was back by November 1902. The second sojourn lasted for twelve more years in South Africa. They proved to be the most seminal years of his life which defined and systematized his concepts of *satyagraha*, *sarvodaya* and *ahimsa*, and the concept of trusteeship in the relations between capital and labour.

Under the British control, the situation became worse for the Indians. Gandhi had to stand up against the institutionalized injustice waged through the Asiatic Department in Transvaal, the Johannesburg Town Council who were depriving Indians even of the few rights they possessed in the Boer Republic. This dismal state of affairs induced him to stay back. As the struggle intensified, the need of a regular newspaper heightened in mobilizing the community. Thus, *Indian Opinion* was born in 1903.

In 1906 the Transvaal government passed the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. Though the Act was disallowed after organized action, it was reenacted in 1907. Act 2 (1907) provided that all Asians in the Transvaal had to take out certificates of registration. The certificate furnished with full details had to be carried at all the times, and failure to comply with this law could result in a fine, a term in imprisonment or deportation. The legislation became effective in July 1907 and the resistance movement commenced which lasted for seven years. The *Satyagraha* was launched after all the attempts at persuading the government failed. The struggle continued as the government exacerbated the Indians' situation by imposing more stringent and irrational laws.

The movement expanded to assimilate more issues during this phase. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1907 in the Transvaal, which sought to exclude new Indians immigrants, was taken up in 1908. Few additional issues were raised in 1913, when the South African government refused to recognize marriages solemnized according to the Indian rites and refused to repeal the £3 tax. The army of protesters swelled as the movement progressed. The campaign continued as the negotiations with the government failed.

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The movement now including women and workers was resumed with full vigour in 1913, which was pronounced for its epic march across the Natal border into the Transvaal, breaching the crucial anti-Asiatic Law. The campaign was suspended in January 1914 as the South African government and Gandhi began to negotiate a settlement. It brought the abolition of the £3 tax and Indians marriages were recognized. The success of the struggle and the settlement had raised different opinions, but that discussion is not the issue of emphasis of the study. More importantly, as for *Satyagraha* itself, Gandhi's gradual development of non-violent disobedience and other legacies were a positive gain for contesting repression.

### ***1.5.2 Print Cult in Gandhi's Politics***

Since the inception of Gandhi's political activism, journalism has been an important component of his protest politics. The anti-Indian moves were countered for the first time in South Africa by the mobilized and articulated expression voiced by the spokesman of their community, M.K. Gandhi with his intense and eloquent mouthpiece, *Indian Opinion*, asserting themselves in an environment of racial segregation and injustice. Gandhi launched his *Satyagraha* in South Africa, three years after the advent of *Indian Opinion*, where it acted as an indispensable component of the eight years long struggle.



SKETCH MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA  
 SHOWING BRITISH POSSESSIONS  
 JULY 1885

British Possessions coloured Red  
 German " " " " Brown  
 Portuguese " " " " Purple



## Chapter 2

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### *G*andhi's Journalism and his Politics of Protest

*“Indian Opinion...was a powerful weapon in the armoury of Passive Resistance and continues to be the only recorder of accurately shifted facts about our countrymen in South Africa and of Passive Resistance. It is in no sense a commercial enterprise.”<sup>1</sup>*

#### **2.1 Gandhi: The Journalist**

Journalism was among the crucial factors that transformed ordinary Gandhi into ‘Mahatma’ Gandhi, and earned him the leadership of the masses. It was also aimed, as everything in his life, towards selfless social service.

Gandhi’s first association with the English society brought him into the realm of journalism that surfaced his latent talent. His initial interactions with the printed world started with the columns of *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* in London. His writing odyssey began with the early articles contributed for the magazines and journals, composed on general themes with an emphasis on discussion of Indian customs and values. The three years of his England stay enlarged his horizon and developed him into ‘a more accomplished free-lance journalist.’

##### ***2.1.1 Protest through Journalism***

Gandhi’s law profession brought him to South Africa, which was waiting to transform and leave an impression on him and his country’s destiny. South Africa gave him space and platform to evolve as a person, a leader with pronounced organizing and mobilizing

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to Mr. J.B. Petit, 16-6-1915, *CWMG*, Vol. XIII (1964), pp. 108

capacity, and a full fledged ‘conscientious’ journalist.<sup>2</sup> Here, he entered the arena of politics and protest, agitating against the disabilities imposed on Indians through varied modes of his struggle as representation, petition, memorandum, etc. In his movement, newspapers always occupied a pivotal position and played an instrumental role in accomplishing and advancing his goals.

#### **2.1.1.1 Phases**

Gandhi’s opposition politics underwent various stages and forms, but newspapers were among his most trusted companions who accompanied him in all phases of this struggle, recording his monumental transformations.

##### **2.1.1.1.1 Freelancer (1893-1903)**

His struggle for the rightful existence of the Indian community in South Africa employed press as the chief mode to promote and publicize the matter. He used to look through all the local newspapers and appropriately respond and argue to any misrepresentations and distortions of facts and issues.

Gandhi was always prepared with his reasoning in these instances, as once in response to an article entitled “*Indian Village-Communities*” in *The Natal Mercury*, on July 1894 that commented on the petition to the Natal Legislative Council by the Indian community in connection with the Franchise Law Amendment Bill<sup>3</sup>, and argued that Parliamentary Government was very different from any form of representation known to the village communities of India. It maintained that village communities was common to all primitive people, and quoted General Sir George Chesney’s views that Indians were still in their political infancy. Gandhi contended his case by stating the instance of the State of Mysore that had given the political franchise rights to its subjects, elaborating that all the landlords and all the non-official graduates of any Indian University were given the

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<sup>2</sup>As S.N. Bhattacharya, (1965) *Mahatma Gandhi: The Journalist*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, p.2, remarks, “If the London Vegetarian Society afforded him a forum to write and speak, the political situation in South Africa chiselled him into a conscientious journalist.”

<sup>3</sup> The Bill excluded Indians from the franchise on the ground that they had not exercised franchise in their own country, and the Indians pleaded their case that they had done so from ancient times in their village communities.

privilege of electing as well as of being elected, thus property and intelligence were represented in the Assembly.<sup>4</sup>

Besides in South Africa, he used to send articles to leading English and Indian newspapers as “*The Times*”, “*The Echo*”, “*The Daily News*”, “*The Daily Telegraph*” and “*Kesari*”.

#### *As a correspondent*

He harnessed the local press and even acted as the South African correspondent to journals outside the country to rally support and ventilate grievances of the South African Indians. His articles and correspondence on the conditions of the South African Indians were given space and were well received in Dadabhai Naoroji’s journal, *India*, published in London on Indian issues.<sup>5</sup> He maintained regular contact, keeping him informed about the situation.

The Anglo-Boer Wars (1899-1902) provided an opportune occasion to exhibit his journalistic skills and proved, as Bhattacharya remarks, ‘a landmark in the free-lance journalism of Gandhi.’<sup>6</sup> The war not only displayed his competence in social service, through the activities of his Indian Ambulance Corps, but saw his expertise as a war correspondent accounting his experiences and activities of the Ambulance Corps that was published in *The Times of India* of Bombay.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to the “*The Natal Mercury*”, 7-7-1894, *CWMG*, Vol. I(1969), pp.144-145

<sup>5</sup> As ‘*India*’ once published Gandhi’s letter to Dadabhai Naoroji reporting about the state of Indians in South Africa, on 9 September 1896, “the court has decided that the Government has power to remove Indians in the Transvaal to locations for both trade and residence. Judge Jorrisen dissented from the decision. Great consternation prevails. It is feared that the removal to locations may paralyze trade. Large interests are at stake. We are relying upon Mr. Chamberlain’s promise to make representations to the Transvaal Government after the trial of a test case, which, he said, was necessary to secure a definite issue.”, in *CWMG*, Vol. III(1960),p.17

<sup>6</sup> Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*,p.6

<sup>7</sup> *The Times of India*(Weekly Edition), “Indian Ambulance Corps in Natal”,16-6-1900, *CWMG*, Vol.III(1960),p.137-141

### ***2.1.1.1.2 Through his own Newspaper, Indian Opinion (1903-1914)***

In order to ventilate the grievances of Indians and mobilize public opinion in their favour, Gandhi started writing and giving interviews to newspapers, He focused on open letters and letters to Editor, but soon realized that occasional writings and the hospitality of newspapers were inadequate for the political campaign he had launched. He needed a mouthpiece to reach out to the people, so in June 1903 he launched *Indian Opinion*. The weekly newspaper was to serve the interests of British Indians in South Africa.

His long acquaintance and experience with the press and its working, gave enough understanding and skills to embolden him to start his own journal in South Africa. His interaction with the editors of the newspapers in India as G. Subrahmanyam of *The Hindu*, Parameshvaran Pillai of *Madras Standard*, Mr. Saunders of *Englishman*, and Mr. Chesney of the *Pioneer* enhanced his skills and expertise in the working of the press.

## **2.2 Press, Purpose and Politics**

Gandhi's politics was multi-dimensional. It had to focus on building a united front by infusing solidarity among the heterogeneous elements of the Indian community. 'The Muslims merchants and their Hindu and Parsi clerks from Bombay, the semi-slave 'indentured' labourers from Madras, and the Natal- born Indian Christians had all to realize their common origin.'<sup>8</sup> Further, it had to create awareness and publicize about the implications of the measures among both the Indians and the Europeans and gather support to exert pressure from people and governments in India and England.

### ***2.2.1 Political Activism and Press: Prior to Indian Opinion***

Gandhi's venture into protest politics gave him enough scope to utilize the efficacy of press for the purpose. This liaison with press and politics made him realize its immeasurable significance, to instrumentally employ as the forceful and persuasive tool. It was well expressed by him when he remarked in a letter to the editor of *The Times of India*, that "**Publicity is our best and perhaps the only weapon of defence.**"<sup>9</sup> He utilized

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<sup>8</sup> B.R. Nanda, (1958), *Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Reprint 2001, p.37

<sup>9</sup> *The Times of India* (Bombay, October 20, 1869) Quoted in Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.3 (emphasis added)

columns of different newspapers to interpret and represent the Indian question in South Africa, till the time he had his own.

### **2.2.1.1 Interaction with Newspapers**

In India and South Africa, Gandhi largely relied on the newspapers for his propaganda. His tour to India in 1896, aimed to gather support for the South African Indians' cause, proved immensely fruitful because of the involvement of press. His interaction with the various newspapers in India as *The Madras Standard*, *The Hindu*, *The Statesman*, *The Amrit Bazaar Patrika* facilitated him to promote and champion the issue which infused due strength into his campaign. His *Green Pamphlet*<sup>10</sup>, a book prepared by him discussing the issue of the South African Indians received space and recognition in the prominent newspapers.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.2.1.2 Forum for Political Opinion and Debate**

Gandhi as a great communicator recognized that communication is the most effective tool to shape opinion and mobilize popular support, and those who had the power of press can create public opinion. Thus, he educated public opinion through printed words.

His letters to the editors of South African dailies provided lessons to fight injustice and exhibit the skills to employ press to publicize and bring the debate to public forum. An interesting example was his letter dated October 25, 1894 to the *Times of Natal*, which carried a contemptuously worded editorial titled, 'Rammysammy'. And Gandhi replied:

You, in your wisdom, would not allow the Indian or the native the precious privilege (of voting) under any circumstances, because they have a dark skin. You would look the exterior only. So long as the skin is white it would not matter to you whether it conceals beneath it poison or nectar. To you the lip-prayer of the pharisee, because he is one, is more acceptable than the sincere repentance of the publican, and this, I presume, you would call Christianity. You may; it is not Christ's.

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<sup>10</sup> The pamphlet, he prepared for his India tour, "*The Grievances of the British Indians South Africa: An Appeal to the Indian Public*", later came to be called as *Green Pamphlet*. CWMG, Vol. II(1976),p.2-36

<sup>11</sup> Different newspapers as Mr. Chesney, editor of *The Pioneer*, Allahabad commented on it through a thoughtful editorial. Quoted in Bhattacharya, op. cit.,p3

He added:

Sir, may I venture to offer a suggestion? Will you re-read your New Testament? Will you ponder over your attitude towards the coloured population of the Colony? Will you then say you can reconcile it with the Bible teachings or the best British traditions? If you have washed your hands clean of both Christ and the British tradition, I can have nothing to say; I gladly withdraw what I have written. Only, it will then be a sad day for British and for India if you have many followers.<sup>12</sup>

### **2.2.1.3 Tool for Publicity and Support**

Publicity was central to Gandhi's protest campaign. He knew their voice needed to be heard to be redressed. He chiefly relied on press as a potential weapon for publicity and gathering support for his campaign. Newspapers, without which *Satyagraha* would not have materialized, were his main field of publicity.

Gandhi became a skilled publicist and between 1894 and 1898 the *London Times* devoted 'eight leading articles' to the Indian problem in South Africa, almost entirely in response to the interest he generated.<sup>13</sup>

### **2.2.2 Purpose and Genesis of a newspaper in his struggle**

The stalemate position of the political activism disillusioned Gandhi with the mode of politics. He was well convinced about the increased gravity of the movement. As he expressed in a letter to Gohkale: "*The struggle is far more intense than I expected.*"<sup>14</sup> Under these circumstances, he realized the urgency to revitalize the campaign.

This heightened need for a *new element* was effectively served by a regular newspaper, which would voice the feelings of Indians confronting racial discrimination in every walk of their life. Indian question could not have been thoroughly served through the existing newspapers having diverging interests. A newspaper in the struggle was more than what

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<sup>12</sup> Letter to "The Times of Natal", *CWMG*, Vol.I(1958),pp.136-137

<sup>13</sup> Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p.37

<sup>14</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. III(emphasis added)

it was; it became a force, a motivational tool. He firmly believed and as he eloquently expressed,

I believe that a struggle which chiefly relies upon internal strength cannot be wholly carried on without a newspaper, and it is also my experience that we could not perhaps have educated the local Indians community, nor kept Indians all over the world in touch with the course of events in South Africa in any other way, with the same ease and success as through the Indian Opinion, which therefore was certainly a most useful and potent weapon in our struggle.<sup>15</sup>

The movement gained new strength when inspired by Gandhi, *Indian Opinion* commenced publication in Durban in June 1903. The Indian Community found in it an organ for 'voicing its feeling and specially devoted to its cause.'

### ***2.2.3 Focus and Approach of the newspaper***

It was a firm proposition of Gandhi that newspaper in the movement was meant for 'service' and should not be used as a commercial enterprise to gather profits. It was the mouthpiece of the Indian community in South Africa expressing their grievances and distressed state to the community itself and the Europeans and the governments in India and England to develop the public opinion and adequate pressure for the cause. Besides the political reasons, the newspaper also aimed towards the social and moral upliftment of the community. Gandhi employed it as an educative tool and means to defend and instill the strong sense of *Indianness*, upholding the honour and culture of India.

#### ***2.2.3.1 Principle of selfless service***

The principle of service and public good was a deep entrenched ideal in Gandhi's thought. As the other aspects of his life was influenced and inspired by it, he ardently believed that the sole aim of journalism should be selfless service. He remarked that,

In my humble opinion, *it is wrong to use a newspaper as a means of earning a living*. There are certain spheres of work which are of such consequence and have such bearing on public welfare that to undertake them for earning one's livelihood will defeat

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<sup>15</sup> M. K. Gandhi(1928), *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Madras: S. Ganesh, Publisher, p.221-222

the primary aim behind them. When, further a newspaper is treated as a means of making profits, the result is likely to be serious malpractices.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout his journalistic career he relentlessly worked on this principle. Despite financial strains, he discarded the system of advertisements as it tampered the purpose of the paper and indulged it into things in which he never believed.

### **2.2.3.2 Relation between Europeans and Indians**

Gandhi believed in fostering amiable relation between Indians and Europeans.<sup>17</sup> His trust in the British Empire was well reflected in his approach to politics, which was chiefly directed towards asserting it. His initial politics was based on firm faith in the Britishness and their sense of equity which claimed that they and Indians both were under ‘the providence of the British Crown’. Thus, press was particularly employed to acquaint the Europeans of the Indian grievances, placing a deep conviction on their ameliorative nature.

### **2.2.3.3 Grievances of South African Indians**

Gandhi’s political activism in South Africa was chiefly directed towards the Indian issues, the grievances of the small Indian community and the breaches of undertakings or violations of acquired rights. He attempted to reason out the injustices against the Indians and justified their presence, stating that,

The elements that generally constitute a reason of expulsion of a people from a civilized States are entirely absent in the case of these people...they are not a political danger to the Government, since they meddle very little, if at all, in politics. They are not notorious robbers, I believe there is not a single case of an Indian trader having suffered imprisonment or even been charged with theft, robbery or any other heinous crimes. Their teetotal habits make them exceptionally peaceful citizens.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Gandhi, *Satyagraha*. (emphasis added)

<sup>17</sup> Gandhi clearly stated in the objectives of The Natal Congress: “To promote concord and harmony among the Indians and Europeans residing in the colony.”, ‘The Constitution of the Natal Indian Congress’, *CWMG*, Vol. I,p.132

<sup>18</sup> Letter to the *Natal Advertiser*, *CWMG*, Vol. II,p.58



The concern and focus on the Indian issues, sometimes even placed Gandhi to plead his cases on exclusive grounds.<sup>19</sup> The newspaper became the prime platform with enough space to raise these issues.

#### **2.2.3.4 Honour of Indians and their Culture**

Gandhi was not concerned just with the political and civic issues related of Indians but also with the honour of India and its culture. He aimed to glorify Indian culture and gave the concept of pride of motherland to the Indians, to silence the white owned newspapers in their attempts to publish derogatory articles. It was the honour of India which was his concern to preserve first, than the political rights.

The arrival of this new adversary made it very clear to the European population of Natal that now Indians will not tolerate any of these derogatory insults. A letter, Gandhi wrote to the *Natal Advertiser* as a reply to an editorial the paper had published that had attacked Indian traders as '*unethical*', '*semi-barbarous*', and '*an undesirable element*' in the colony:

But you say these wretched Asiatics live a semi-barbaric life. It would be highly interesting to learn your views of a semi-barbaric life. I have some notion of the life they live. If a room without a nice, rich carpet and ornamental hangings, a dinner table (perhaps unvarnished) without an expensive table-cloth, with no flowers to decorate it, with no wines spread, no pork or beef *ad lib*, be a semi- barbaric life; if a white comfortable dress, specially adapted to a warm climate, which, I am told, many Europeans envy them in the trying heat of summer, be a semi-barbaric life; if no beer, no tobacco, or ornamental walking stick, no golden watch chain, no luxuriously-fitted sitting room, be a semi-barbaric life; if, in short, what one commonly understands by a simply frugal life be a semi-barbaric life, then, indeed, the Indian traders must plead guilty to the charge, and the sooner semi-barbarity is wiped out from the highest Colonial civilization, the better....

It seems, on the whole, that their simplicity, their total abstinence from intoxicants, their peaceful and, above all, their business lives and frugal habits, which should serve as a recommendation, are really at the bottom of all this contempt and hatred of the poor Indian

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<sup>19</sup> As in a petition, Gandhi argued, "Your Lordship's Petitioners beg to draw Lordship's attention to the anomaly that the Bill would rank the Indian lower than the rawest Native. For while the rawest Native can become emancipated if he acquires the proper qualifications, the Indian British subject who is now entitled to vote would be so disenfranchised that he can never again become emancipated, no matter how capable he becomes in after life, or how capable he is at the time of disenfranchisement." 'Petition to Lord Ripon', *CWMG*, Vol.I(1958),p.124

trader. And they are British subjects. Is this Christian-like, is this fair play, is this justice, is this civilization? I pause for a reply.<sup>20</sup>

The spirit of nationalism, which was rising in India, had a deep impact in South Africa. The *Satyagraha* was a part of the struggle for the dignity of India, and a moral crusade, though waged on the South African soil. Gandhi eloquently employed his pen to uphold the Indian art and culture “for the edification of the South African readers”, addressing especially ‘to the Indians who have never been in India’.<sup>21</sup>

#### **2.2.3.5 Socio -Political and Moral Education of Indians**

Gandhi visualized the newspaper as an efficient tool for the overall advancement of the community, and “a great instrument for education”.<sup>22</sup> *Indian Opinion* served the purpose of a weekly newsletter which disseminated news of the week among the community. He was of the opinion that,

Newspapers are meant primarily to educate the people. They make the latter familiar with contemporary history. This is a work of no mean responsibility. It is a fact, however, that readers cannot always trust newspapers. Often facts are found to be quite the opposite of what has been reported. If newspapers realized that it was their duty to educate the people, they could not but wait to check a report before publishing it. It is true that often they have to work under difficult conditions. They have to sift the true from the false in a short time and can only guess at the truth. Even then, I am of the opinion that it is better not to publish a report at all if it has not been found possible to verify it.<sup>23</sup>

Through the columns of the newspaper, Gandhi tried to educate the readers about sanitation, health<sup>24</sup>, self-discipline and good citizenship. He imparted knowledge on a wide range of health matters, from the evils of Tobacco<sup>25</sup>, alcohol<sup>26</sup>, the essentiality of

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<sup>20</sup>Letter to “the *Natal Advertiser*”, 19-09-1893, *CWMG*, Vol.I(1969), p.60-61

<sup>21</sup> ‘Indian Art’, *Indian Opinion*(henceforth *IO*), 17-9-1903, *CWMG*, Vol. III(1960),p.447

<sup>22</sup> “Indian Opinion”, *IO*,28-4-1906 , Vol. V(1961) ,p.289-290

<sup>23</sup> *IO*,12-4-1913. *CWMG* Vol. XII

<sup>24</sup> *IO*, 8-3-1913, *CWMG*, Vol. XII p.479-484

<sup>25</sup> “Evils of Tobacco”, *IO*, 28-4-1906, *CWMG*, Vol. V(1961), p.298

<sup>26</sup> “Indians and Alcohol”, *IO*,10-4-1909, *CWMG*, Vol. IX(1963),p.210

being a vegetarian and importance of fruit diet,<sup>27</sup> vegetable diet<sup>28</sup>, significance of exercise to different types of remedies and cures.<sup>29</sup> Gandhi emphasis on the dietary issues was an important component of his socio-political reform. Joseph Alter opined that his ‘diet reform’ was the part of ‘his vision of politics’ and was placed in a large scale socio-political change.<sup>30</sup> Gandhi’s faith in, what Alter calls, “biomoral imperative of public health” was an essential segment of his program of socio-political action. He argues that a distinction between his personal experiments with dietetics, celibacy, hygiene, nature cure, his virtual obsession with health, and his faith in truth and non-violence cannot be conceived.

Gandhi’s knowledge about health and the concern for its dissemination was reflective in the collection of articles entitled “*General Knowledge About Health*” and other such essays published in *Indian Opinion*. He laid profound emphasis on the development of moral strength of the community.

## **2.3 The Newspaper and the Gandhian Resistance Movement**

### ***2.3.1 Gandhi’s Indian Opinion***

#### **2.3.1.1 Origin and Evolution**

Initially Gandhi used different newspapers as the forum to express his views, through letters to local dailies and interviews. After ten years of relentless crusade and given the magnitude of the daunting tasks, Gandhi realized that the twin tasks of mobilizing public opinion and influencing official decisions required a regular newspaper. Thus was born *Indian Opinion* in June 1903.

Gandhi was clear about the nature and content of the paper. The weekly journal, *Indian Opinion* commenced as a sixteen pages tabloid issued every Saturday in four languages. Three years later Gandhi dropped two of those languages for the want of competent

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<sup>27</sup> *IO*,15-3-1913, *CWMG*, Vol. XI(1964), p.492

<sup>28</sup> *IO*,22-3-1913, *CWMG*, Vol. XI (1964), p.500

<sup>29</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.XI and XII [*IO*, January-August 1913]

<sup>30</sup> Joseph S. Alter (2000), *Sex, Diet, and the Politics of Nationalism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, quoted in Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005), *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, p.20

editors, but he himself edited the paper in the other two languages and issued the paper on time until he left South Africa in 1914. Even after from India, Gandhi continued supporting *Indian Opinion* all his life by providing regular editorial materials and moral and financial support.

### **2.3.1.2 Policy, Role and Function**

*Indian Opinion* gave enough scope to Gandhi to expand his activities as a protagonist for the cause he was fighting. The journal was solely for the movement. Its policy was primarily directed to cater the Indian issues, an activist for Indian rights. The first issue of the journal explicated its guidelines “to advocate the cause of the British Indians in the sub-continent” and “persistently endeavour to bring about a proper understanding between the two communities which Providence has brought together under one flag.”<sup>31</sup>

Gandhi elaborated the threefold objects of the journal as,

First, to make our grievances known to the government, to the whites here in South Africa and in England and to people in India; secondly to tell our people of their own shortcomings and to exhort them to overcome these and, thirdly, this is perhaps the principal object to eliminate the distinctions as between Hindus and Mohomedans and also those among Gujaratis, Tamilians and Calcuttawallas prevalent here.<sup>32</sup>

The journal was too focused in its approach as it was very categorical in addressing the two target communities and urged for their support. The proprietor of *Indian Opinion* delineated the advantages for its subscription and support of the Indian community. It was put forth as a newspaper that would advocate its cause as well as give news in their own languages, local and general information, and epitome of happenings in India, commercial intelligence, and contributions by competent writers, Indian as well as European, on moral, social and intellectual aspects formed the basis of content guidelines.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 10

<sup>32</sup> “Indian Opinion”, *IO*, 28-4-1906, *CWGMG*, Vol. V(1961), p.289-290

<sup>33</sup> Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p.10

Besides the Indian community, the paper presented itself to be useful for the European community as it would “give it an idea of Indian thought and aspirations” and “would also acquaint it with such Indian matters which are not commonly known to it.”<sup>34</sup> He believed that True Imperialists cannot ignore such (Indian) matters that are not commonly known to them. Uma Mesthrie observes that “the English columns explained why Indians were resisting, and they were directed at white readers. The Gujerati columns offered guidelines for the resisters in the campaign.”<sup>35</sup>

The newspaper and its functioning was largely organized and managed by Gandhi. As he admits that,

Sjt. Mansukhlal Nazar became the first editor. But I had to bear the brunt of the work, having for the most of the time to be practically in charge of the journal. Not that Sjt. Mansukhlal could not carry it on...he would never venture to write on intricate South African problems so long as I was there. He had the greatest confidence in my discernment, and therefore threw on me the responsibility of attending to the editorial column...I was avowedly the editor of Indian Opinion, I was virtually responsible for its conduct.<sup>36</sup>

Gandhi believed to be well informed about the happenings, for which the journal needed regular supplements from different areas and he made arrangements for the purpose. Within South Africa itself *Indian Opinion* had a well networked system of correspondents, providing news form different parts of the colony.<sup>37</sup>

Further, his letter to Dadabhai Naoroji expressed his want for the correspondents in other countries, as he wrote: “Indian Opinion has entered on a third stage in its career...It is now intended to have a weekly or a fortnightly letter from England of general interest but also dealing particularly with the Indian question in South Africa,... Could you recommend anyone who would undertake the work and if so, at what rate?”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bhattacharya, *op cit.*, p.10

<sup>35</sup> Uma Shashikant Mesthrie, “From Advocacy to Mobilization: *Indian Opinion*, 1903-1914” in Les Switzer (ed.) (1997), *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance 1880-1960s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.119

<sup>36</sup> M.K. Gandhi (1958), *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahemdabad: Navjivan Publishing House, p.210

<sup>37</sup> “Johannesburg Letter”, *CWMG*, Vol. VII, 47, p.80

<sup>38</sup> Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji, 10-12-1904, *CWMG*, Vol. IV (1960) p. 311

Similarly, he put forth his request for correspondents for the journal to G.K. Gokhale through his letter, "I am also anxious to secure either honorary or paid correspondents who would contribute weekly notes in English , Gujerati, Hindi and Tamil ...The weekly notes should give an idea of what is being done on your side with reference to Indian Question."<sup>39</sup>

The sustenance of the journal required a firm determination in the face of acute financial condition and the ineffectiveness to find Tamil and Hindi writers that forced him to later drop both these editions.

#### ***2.3.1.2.1 Newspaper and Advertising***

In the early stages, the guidelines on policy for *Indian Opinion*, suggested that the paper served as 'the best advertising medium' for Indians and Europeans in those branches of trade in which Indians are especially concerned.

But later, there was an evident departure in the policy. Gandhi's later stance on non-acceptance of advertising support is explained by his view that, advertisements are inserted by people who are impatient to get rich, in order to gain over their rivals. He firmly disapproved of the idea of diverting time and energy on activities that distinctly hampers his spirit of *service*. He believed in accepting non-commercial advertisements that serve a public purpose. On receiving advertisement support for running a newspaper, Gandhi reasoned that, "We believe that the system of advertisements is bad in itself, in that it sets up insidious competition, to which we are opposed, and often lends itself to misinterpretation on a large scale, and that; if we may not use this journal for the purpose of supporting us entirely, we have no right to cater for and use our time in setting up advertisements."<sup>40</sup> He discontinued the practice of publishing the advertisements, arguing that it was "one of the sorriest feature of modern civilization, and for our part we wish to be rid of it."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Letter to G. K. Gokhale, 13-1-1905, *CWMG*, Vol. IV(1960) p. 332

<sup>40</sup> "Ourselves" *IO* 14-9-1912, *CWMG*, Vol.XI(1964),p.326

<sup>41</sup> "Ourselves", *IO* 14-9-1912, *CWMG*, Vol.XI(1964) p.330

Having rejected advertisements as the means to promote the sale of the paper, Gandhi, instead emphasized on the increased subscription. He devised unconventional modes to promote the sale of the paper and the Indian question for which it was started. He argued that additional columns would be saved and could be employed in 'furthering the struggle'; and appealed to the readers to patronize the journal liberally. Addressing the readers in the Gujarati section of the *Indian Opinion*, dated August 24, 1907, as "Suggestion to Readers":

Indian Opinion is at present rendering invaluable service. This claim will probably appear exaggerated. However, the statement is justified. The Transvaal Indians are at present carrying on a heroic struggle and this paper is engaged in furthering the struggle in every possible manner. We therefore deem it to be the duty of every Indian to read every line of it pertaining to the struggle. Whatever is read is afterwards to be acted upon, and the issue, after being read, is to be preserved and not thrown away...Moreover, our cause needs to be discussed in every home in the required number of copies of Indian Opinion to their friends and, advising them to read them, seek all possible help from them.<sup>42</sup>

He ceased this practice, "as *Satyagraha* gradually took root in the community, there was clearly visible a corresponding moral amelioration of the paper as well as of the press from the standpoint of *Satyagraha*."<sup>43</sup> He strongly believed in infusing moral content and strength to both the means and the end of the movement.

### **2.3.1.3 Its Content**

The *Indian Opinion* commenced as foolscap sized, three column journal, publishing news of interest from the 'South African Indian point of view'. Emphasizing the Indian cause, it was loaded with discriminatory legal Acts and cases reinforcing the disabilities against Indians, and pleadings for understanding from the imperial power; and letters to the editors of local newspapers correcting false and mistaken reports concerning Indians. Also, several features of popular interest and happenings of the progress of the freedom movement in India, as Bengal partition that encouraged boycott of foreign goods by Indians in South Africa. Besides these, there were contributions from 'competent writers'

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<sup>42</sup> "Suggestion to Readers", IO, 24-8-1907, *CWMG*, Vol.VII(1962) p.186

<sup>43</sup>Gandhi, *Satyagraha*, p.224

on 'social, moral and intellectual' subjects. Gandhi's articles as on 'Indian Art'<sup>44</sup> exhibit his experiments also on intellectual and aesthetics issues.

The journal was used as an important inspirational instrument of the movement. Few sections of *Indian Opinion* were devoted for biographical portrayal of great men and women of the world, providing worthy examples to the fellow countrymen to emulate. It reported,

we believe that we are bound to benefit from a knowledge and constant contemplation of the lives of such devout men and women, and we therefore propose to give the stories of their lives from time to time. We hope that the readers of this journal will read their lives and follow them in practice and thus encourage us.<sup>45</sup>

The biographical reproductions were of 'brave and pious men and women of high principles' as Tolstoy, Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, Ishwas Chandra Vidyasagar, Mazzini, Elizabeth Fry.

*Indian Opinion* covered news about Indians in other British colonies in the hope of forging a common identity. The journal emphasized the idea of one united community that could be forged into a nation in South Africa.<sup>46</sup> Gandhi kept himself and the community abreast of the political happenings in India. The journal closely observed and documented it. *Indian Opinion* reported about the protest that arose against the Partition of Bengal and urged the Indians in South Africa to emulate, "if the people act accordingly, there would be nothing surprising if our troubles came to a speedy end. For, if this is done, Great Britain will be put to great loss."<sup>47</sup>

### ***2.3.2 An Instrument for Identity Construction***

Indians in South Africa were in numerical minority. They were largely concentrated in Natal and to a lesser extent in the mining town of the southern Transvaal.

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<sup>44</sup> Indian Art, *IO*, 17-9-1903, *CWMG*, Vol.III(1960) p.447

<sup>45</sup> "Elizabeth Fry", *IO*, 19-8-1905, *CWMG*, Vol.V(1961),p.45

<sup>46</sup> Help From Natal, *IO*, 27-2-1909, *CWMG*, Vol.IX(1963),p.201

<sup>47</sup>"Will India Wake Up?", *IO* 19-8-1905, *CWMG*, Vol.V(1961),p.44



### **2.3.2.1 Heterogeneous to Homogeneous Identity Formation**

Indians in South Africa were a heterogeneous entity. They first came in Natal in 1860 as indentured labourers. Since then several streams of migration swelled the community's population. The colonial born descendents of these labourers sought employment into different sectors and developed into the Indian bourgeoisie in South Africa. Besides them, the migrants also included the traders, mostly Gujaratis. The labourers were mainly Tamil speaking who came from south of India. For putting forth a united stand, the traders had to accept their kinship with the poor indentured labourers and had to acknowledge the Indian identity above these sections.

Here, Gandhi became sensitive to the multi-lingual, multi-caste, multi-class and multi-religious nature of Indian people. He was aware of the need to eliminate this heterogeneity in the community that might develop fissures in the movement and thus, emphasized and urged them to be united,

“All religious antagonism, as that one is Hindu or a Muslim, a Christians or a Parsi, should be forgotten. Let there be no provincial distinctions such as Bengalis, Madrasis, Gujaratis, Punjabis, etc. All ideas of high and low which divide men into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras should be abandoned. Indians are all subject to same laws: if so how can we fight them disunited?”<sup>48</sup>

He further observed, “Indians from Bombay are often rude to those hailing from Calcutta and Madras and indifferent to their feeling...Even good Indians show contempt for Colonial born Indians.”<sup>49</sup> *Indian Opinion* was a handy tool for forging unity and thereby maintained its main purpose as to eliminate these distinctions.<sup>50</sup>

#### **2.3.2.1.1 Assertion of Indianness**

The campaign aimed to instill respect and love for India, especially among youth. As Gandhi himself states, while discussing about the aims of the Natal Indian Congress, that,

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<sup>48</sup> Letters to Indians in South Africa, July 1914, *CWMG*, Vol.XII(1964) ,p.482

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* , p.482

<sup>50</sup> “Indian Opinion”,*IO*,28-4-1906,*CWMG*, Vol.V(1961),p.289

“The chief object of the Association...,to create in them (youth) a love for the mother country and to give them general information about it. It was also intended to impress them that free Indians considered them as their own kith and kin, and to create respect for the latter in the minds of the former.”<sup>51</sup>

He emphasized the sense of *Indianness* among South African Indians, and attempted to exhibit and assert their convictions and rights through the Indian identity. In a petition to Natal Assembly (June 28, 1894), Gandhi explicates the Indian understanding and expertise in the principles of elections and representation, to claim franchise rights of South African Indians. He argued:

The Indian Nation has known, and has exercised the power of election from times far prior to the time when the Anglo-Saxon races first became acquainted with the principles of representations...the exercise of the franchise by them (Indians) is no extension of a new privilege...on the contrary, the disqualification to exercise it would be an unjust restriction which, under similar circumstances, would never be put on them in the land of their birth.<sup>52</sup>

#### **2.3.2.1.2 Efface Sectionalism**

The *Indianness* of the community concealed diverse identities rooted in the varied regional, religious and cultural backgrounds of the Indian migrants. Gandhi was aware that posing a united front was indispensable for a strong resistance. He initiated the task to negotiate these differences and realize a common identity for the Indians. Gandhi made all the efforts to unify and bring in all sections of the community to stand together as a wholesome entity, providing strength.

He advocated and advanced the object of the journal as to eliminate the distinctions, as between Hindus and Mohammedans and also those among, Gujaratis, Tamilians and Calcuttawallahs. His newspaper was brought out and published in four languages, English, Gujarati, Tamil and Hindi to avoid sectionalism. It was a strategic realization for Gandhi that the power of language familiar to the people could be used to rally them

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<sup>51</sup> Gandhi, *Satyagraha*, p.77

<sup>52</sup> Petition To Natal Asembly, June 28, 1894, *CWMG*, Vol. I, (1958) p.93-94

together for the cause. The chief consideration behind his choice of his medium was to disseminate the 'message' to the whole community.

### **2.3.2.2 Identity in itself and for the *community***

With the increased momentum of the movement of rights, the Indian community evolved a strong sense of '*identity for itself.*' The growth of consciousness about the reality of their deprivation, recognition of common interests and grievances, the identification of an opposition group with whom the interests were in conflict and a realization that only by collective community action could change be initiated, developed the '*community in itself*' to '*community for itself.*'<sup>53</sup>

Before the advent of Gandhi in the political scene, the awareness about the communitarian consciousness was evident among the percipient section. The formation of the Natal Indian Congress with Gandhi's initiative was the organizational expression of this consciousness, aiming to safeguard Indian interests and to acquaint the Britishers in South Africa and England and the people of India with their conditions.

The initiation of Gandhi into Indian politics in South Africa and his effort to draw a petition<sup>54</sup>, countering the Franchise Amendment Bill, was the first ever petition sent by the Indians to a South African Legislature and the first expression of the community as the whole. He pronounced and rooted a unified Indian identity for the Indians in South Africa. He adroitly employed press to disseminate and assert the idea of united communitarian front, moving beyond the sectional identities. This developed consciousness went on to organize and mobilize the community to stand united for their cause.

### **2.3.2.3 Gandhi: South African Indians and Natives**

Gandhi's approach towards the natives and his disapproval on developing a united stand with them is a grey area of his politics in South Africa, which has often been tabled for

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<sup>53</sup> The concept inspired by Marx's '*class in itself*' and '*class for itself*'.

<sup>54</sup> Petition to Natal Assembly, June 28, 1894, *CWMG*, Vol. I(1958), p92-96

scrutiny. Many scholars have looked at this relationship and found it unsatisfactory. Les Switzer, an expatriate South African who is an authority on the Black press in that country, argues,

Men of the moral and intellectual stature of Solomon Plaatje, John Dube, John Tengo Jabavu, Walter Rubusana and Abdul Abdurrahman, to name but a few, exercised, if anything, a more profound influence in the history of resistance in this period than did Gandhi. Did the Mahatma have links with any of these Black leaders or with any of the political, economic and cultural organizations being developed by Blacks during this period? The record suggests that he did not.

Switzer continues,

There is no record in the Mahatma's published remembrances or in the pages of *Indian Opinion* during this period to suggest that Gandhi saw passive resistance as anything other than an instrument of protest on behalf of the Indian in South Africa.<sup>55</sup>

Though, James D. Hunt observes that these statements are a mixture of fact and fiction. He argues that it is true that Gandhi confined his efforts to his own Indian community in South Africa and never formed a common front with Black leaders or Black organizations. Gandhi consistently sought a special position for his people who were separated from and superior to that of the Blacks. However he was not ignorant of these organizations or their leaders, nor is it evident that a common front could have been formed in that country in the first decades of this century. But, he reasons, that,

Gandhi was a community reformer who tried to raise the standards of Indian life into a more modern British pattern...he was preoccupied with relations with the British, who were the dominant power and from whom Indians hoped to gain relief from some of the forms of discrimination which limited their economic and other possibilities. He had no need for an outreach to other population groups until 1906, when he challenged the government with passive resistance against a registration act which applied only to Asiatics...The Indians, Coloured and Africans were often fighting their battles in different colonies, against different laws, and on the basis of different cultural foundations.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in James D. Hunt, "Gandhi and the Black People of South Africa".

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*

Gandhi's thinking and behaviour towards different peoples whom he encountered in South Africa shaped the protest policies and methods he employed there. Paul F. Power<sup>57</sup> points that Gandhi's view of Africans can be seen within the pattern of his responses to a complex situation where two competitive, European minorities dominated a smaller, chiefly Indian, Asian community and a great, indigenous majority.<sup>58</sup> Paul holds that it is his concern for Indian disabilities that he held his people apart from and above Africans, to the extent that for Indians to be classified and treated as Africans was a basic grievance against European law and custom.

Gandhi, during his struggle, always acknowledged the Africans as the natives and never denied the legitimacy of their claims and aspirations. But he doubted their alliance with the Indians, and argued that both the groups had different goals and were placed in different circumstances. Bhana and Vahed<sup>59</sup> points that Gandhi perceived the distinctions between them that were enough to deny a united front, as the African were the natives and the claimant of the soil, whereas the Indians were a minority claiming a respectful existence on the basis of the imperial doctrine of equality.

#### ***2.3.2.3.1 Conception of South African Indianness***

*Indianness* was envisaged and began to evolve from the time Indians began to reach the subcontinent. The conception of *South African Indianness* was quite restricted with regard to other communities in the region. Bhana and Vahed throws light on the evolution of this exclusive identity of Indians. They put forth that the racial attitudes emerged with changes in the political economy of Natal. It led Indians to come in conflict and competition with Whites and Africans over 'land, labour and commerce' in the

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<sup>57</sup> Power, Paul F.(1969), "Gandhi in South Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 , pp. 441-455

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p.445 Paul F. Power gives the numerical details of the population, enumerating the approximate population figures in the two areas where Gandhi operated: the Transvaal (1885) - 300,000 Europeans, 12,000 Indians, 940,000 Africans; Natal (1906) - 97,000 Europeans, 110,000 Indians, and 900,000 Africans.

<sup>59</sup> Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005), *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors.

public and private sectors. In this situation, identities of the groups emerged and came to fore. They enunciated that *Indianness* as a basis of migrant politics also came into being in these circumstances.<sup>60</sup> Gandhi developed this concept of *Indianness* in the South Africa, which exhibited “*otherness*” and “*separateness*”, as he argued that ‘Indians’ could indeed claim greater affinity to Western civilization because of their historical past. His understanding largely disapproved of equating Indians with Africans and conceived the identity exclusively, even while asserting their rights, as he remarked in a petition, “Your Lordship’s Petitioners have noticed with shame the zealous attempt made to compare your Petitioners with the natives of South Africa.”<sup>61</sup>

Here, Bhana maintains that “Gandhian politics helped to embed *Indianness* into the racialized ethos of emergent White supremacy in South Africa.”<sup>62</sup> He employed it to define the community by placing it within an imperial context. It was a part of his strategy to utilize the imperial framework to defend the rights of Indians as British subjects.

#### 2.3.2.3.2 ‘*Otherness*’ from the Natives

His attitude towards the natives reflected an idea of *Otherness*. Thus, the May 1895 petition from Transvaal Indians to Lord Ripon, the British Colonial Secretary, which Gandhi drafted, mentioned as a complaint their inability to travel by first or second class on the railways. Indians, the petition held, ‘are huddled together in the same compartment with Natives’.<sup>63</sup> It is of symbolic interest that the Natal Indian Congress, to which Gandhi was counsel and secretary, successfully demanded that the Natal authorities should provide three entrances instead of two in public buildings, so that Indians would have their own and not have to share one with Africans. He strongly disapproved the authorities’ perception of equating the Indians with the natives, as he argued,

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<sup>60</sup> Bhana and Vahed, *Making of a Political Reformer*, pp.13-14

<sup>61</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.I(1958),p.122

<sup>62</sup> Surendra Bhana (1997), *Gandhi’s Legacy: The Natal Indian Congress, 1894-1994*, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press., quoted in Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005), *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, p.14

<sup>63</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.I(1958),p.199

There is...a law which says that Natives and Indians...must be provided with certain passes; and also a bye-law in Durban which provides for the registration of native servants and "others belonging to the uncivilized races of Asia." This presupposes that the Indian is a barbarian. There is a very good reason for requiring registration of a native in that he is yet being taught the dignity and necessity of labour. The Indians knows it and he is imported because he knows it. Yet, to have the pleasure of classifying him with the natives, he too is required to be registered...I may further illustrate the proposition that the Indian is put on the same level with the native in many other ways also.

In Durban Post and Telegraph Offices there were separate entrances for natives and Asiatics and Europeans. We felt the indignity too much and many respectable Indians were insulted and called all sorts names by the clerks at the counter. <sup>64</sup>

In this perspective, Paul Power explicates that "this position meant support for an end to ideological racialism, but also the retention of belief in autonomy for each distinct group."<sup>65</sup> A different view of Gandhi and Africans is offered by Pyarelal, who writes: "He learned to understand and sympathize with them and missed no opportunity of rendering them whatever service he was capable of. He served them during the Zulu War."<sup>66</sup> Although he urged co-operation, Gandhi did not approve of joint efforts by Indians and Africans.

Gandhi's approach towards the natives was not coloured by the racial prejudice, but largely driven by political considerations. It is well argued by Uma Mesthrie, as she holds that, "This restricted vision, solidly rooted in what was deemed to be in the best political interests of an insecure minority group, remained the policy of *Indian Opinion* for more than a generation".<sup>67</sup> Gandhi's attitude is well examined and summed by Paul Power as he laid his erudite stance that "when linking the phrase 'all men are brothers' with Gandhi to describe his view of mankind and his efforts to eliminate such injustices as 'untouchability', one should keep in mind that he was a *cultural federalist* who resisted any movement toward the social and political solidarity of African and Asian peoples."

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<sup>64</sup> CWMG, Vol.II(1962),p.10

<sup>65</sup> Power, 'Gandhi in South Africa', p.446(emphasis added)

<sup>66</sup> Pyarelal(1962), "Gandhiji and the African Question", *African Quarterly* , I, July-September.

<sup>67</sup> Mesthrie, *op. cit.*, p.112

### ***2.3.3 A Strategy for Political Protest and Mobilization***

Press and particularly *Indian Opinion* had out performed its role in the Gandhian resistance. Indians had to be organized for the resistance and the *Natal Indian Congress* was a first major political expression of the community, founded in August 1894, designed as a body concentrated not only on politics but social and moral uplift of its members. It was not merely an instrument for the defence of the political and economic rights of the Indian minority, but also a lever for its internal reform and unity.<sup>68</sup>

#### ***2.3.3.1 Comprehensive Propaganda***

Propaganda was the prime weapon of the campaign. Gandhi employed press to publicize the issues. *Indian Opinion* for the larger publicity and benefit of the community took up to translate the Ordinances printed in English into Gujarati.<sup>69</sup> It provided comprehension to the legislative measures for proper understanding and dissemination of the problems. These efforts facilitated the community to avoid misleading interpretations and assist in developing public opinion.

#### ***2.3.3.2 Instrument for Political Education***

Press played a larger role in politics, acting as a political guide to the community. It created consciousness about the reality by politically educating the people and making them responsible members of the community. The resistance movement involved various political tools as petitioning, signature campaign etc. which were publicized through the press and generated awareness about the politics and its working. Besides being informative and educative, the columns of the newspapers were quite participative. He used to communicate with his readers through the leaves of his journal. It was like what S. N. Bhattacharya calls, 'a communion with people.'

Gandhian idea of newspaper in a movement was largely educative, that people could understand not only the importance of independence, social, economic and political; but

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<sup>68</sup> Nanda, *Mahatame Gandhi*, p.39

<sup>69</sup> Gandhi, *Satyagraha*, p.155



also become active participants in the struggle. It was a part of his strategy to utilize every move in the campaign for the political education of the community.

### 2.3.3.3 *Agency in Organization and Mobilization*

Gandhi's prime aim to use press was to mobilize the community to his line of action. Press acted as the chief *agency* in organizing the campaign. The *Indian Opinion* was entrusted to the monumental task of mobilizing Indians for the cause. The editorials urged and called upon the community to stand for "their duty" and come up to "go to gaol rather than submit to the proposed Act."<sup>70</sup>

The journal was well received in the community which was evident from its increased subscription through this period. This expansion was significant as an increased circulation of *Indian Opinion* meant "growth of education and patriotism."<sup>71</sup> Gandhi remarked that at the peak of the struggle the number of subscribers increased to 3,500.<sup>72</sup>

The movement commenced and sustained for a long time, with phases of ups and downs. The journal kept the momentum of the struggle even in the face of Government's broken 'sacred pledges' and intransigent stance. On these occasions, once *Indian Opinion* wrote to maintain the spirits of the people,

In spite of the bill being rushed forward a stage further, we imagine that it will never reach the third reading stage. But it is well for passive resisters to keep themselves in readiness. It is to be hoped that, if the struggle revived the impending third campaign will be the purest, the last and the most brilliant of all. We share the belief with Thoreau, that one true passive resister is enough to win victory for right. Right is on our side.<sup>73</sup>

The campaign continued and streams of people joined in the struggle for the '*right*', drawing widespread support from India and England. It remained in motion till 1914 and would not have been a success without *Indian Opinion*, awakening the Indians of their rights and privileges.

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<sup>70</sup> 'Will Indians Be Slaves', [IO, 11-5-1907], CWMG, Vol.VI,p.456-458

<sup>71</sup> [IO,12-10-1907], CWMG, Vol.VII(1962), 277

<sup>72</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, p.223

<sup>73</sup> "The Bill", IO, 3-5-1913, CWMG, Vol.XII p.58

### ***.3.3.3.1 Patriotic Citations and Examples***

*Indian Opinion* utilized its columns to infuse patriotic sentiments in the community. Editorials with motivational citations and poems were used to instill courage for participation in the struggle. A poem quoting a Gujarati poet in India was printed, urging the readers to be courageous enough to sacrifice for one's honour:

To be cowardly is a disgrace.  
Suffer not insult; death is far better...  
Wealth may return that once has gone;  
Forever gone are honour and name.<sup>74</sup>

In another poem, it was aimed to pursue the readers for resistance:

Forward ye all to battle, the bugles sound  
Raise the cry and take the plunge, for victory's abound.  
By plunging and savouring success is strength found.  
Raise the cry and take the plunge, for victory's abound.

The poem attempts to encourage by citing exemplary acts as Columbus's discovery of the New World, Napoleon's triumph over his enemies, Martin Luther's defiance of the Church, heroic deeds of Alexander and Scott.<sup>75</sup>

Gandhi also gathered and published a wide range of inspirational excerpts and examples for the cause. He even drew examples and analogies from ancient mythologies and literature. He cited from the ancient epics as the *Ramayana*: "What *Rama* did with *Ravana*, the Indian community has done with the Transvaal government...he could not make *Ravana* understand. And in the end, *Ravana* was defeated because he was in the wrong...The community has, therefore, only to prepare for the struggle."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>The Transvaal Struggle [IO, 25-5-1907], *CWMG*, Vol. VI(1961) .p.492-494

<sup>75</sup>The Transvaal Struggle [IO, 18-5-1907] *CWMG*, Vol. VI(1961),p.480-481

<sup>76</sup>[IO, 29-6-1907], *CWMG*, Vol. VII(1962),p. 63-64

The journal put forth various examples of ongoing resistance movements to draw inspiration. Gandhi cited the English suffragette movement by the “Brave Women”. Motivated by their courage, he remarked: “This courage and tenacity deserves to be emulated by the Transvaal Indians, in fact, by the whole Indian community.”<sup>77</sup> These motivational endeavours of the press were crucial factors in mobilization for the movement.

#### **2.3.3.3.2 Women Participation**

*Indian Opinion* stood for a united resistance that called for the development of the community as a homogenous entity, inclusive of all individuals and sections. The journal motivated and encouraged the women participation to make the campaign a wholesome struggle, through persuasive and motivating articles as “When women are manly, will men be effeminate?”<sup>78</sup> In 1913, the newspaper in its front page hailed “Native Women’s Brave Stand” against the pass laws in the Orange Free State, urging the inclusion of Indian women as resisters in the ongoing movement.<sup>79</sup>

The Indian women broke through their age long restrictions. From docile domestic servants to their husbands and other male folk, they rose to the level of respectable British Indian citizens, participating actively and in different ways in the agitation. The campaign witnessed the emergence of active band of women resisters and formation of organized fronts as ‘Transvaal Indian Women Association’. They stood for the “honour of Indian womanhood” and the community, and for the preservation of which they declared to initiate passive resistance and enthusiastically offered to “suffer imprisonment rather than suffer indignity”.<sup>80</sup>

The resolution of the Indian women of Johannesburg on the Searle judgment, which questioned the validity of the Indian marriages, was seen as a significant development of the passive resistance campaign. *Indian Opinion* encouraged and praised their efforts stating, “We congratulate *our plucky sisters* who have dared to fight the government rather

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<sup>77</sup> Brave Women, [IO, 28-12-1907], *CWMG*, Vol. VII (1962), p. 453

<sup>78</sup> IO, 23-2-1907, *CWMG*, Vol. VI (1961), p. 335

<sup>79</sup> Mesthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 117

<sup>80</sup> Indian Women as Passive Resisters [IO, 10-5-1913], *CWMG*, Vol. XII (1964), p. 65

submit to the insult offered by the Searle judgment. They will cover themselves and the land of their birth, as, indeed, of their adoption, with glory.”<sup>81</sup>

Their participation provided immeasurable strength to the movement. Gandhi was deeply moved by the courage of the Indian “Women in Jail” shown in the face hardships.<sup>82</sup> The paper accounted their valuable contribution marking the initiation of the political activism among the Indian women in South Africa.

#### **2.3.3.4 External Inspiration: Support from India and Britain**

Gandhi believed that the support from India and the Imperial Government was particularly crucial for putting due pressure on the authorities in South Africa. The outward pressure through Press was intended to secure help and internationalize the cause. It aroused consciousnesses in England and India about the Indian question

To improve the bargaining position Gandhi made appeals to emerging Indian nationalism to persuade the imperial authorities to bring pressure on South African governments. Pursuing this billiard relationship, Gandhi went to India twice (1896 and 1899), and twice travelled to London (1906 and 1909). Contacts with some Congress party leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal K. Gokhale, and B. G. Tilak, enhanced Gandhi's cause and future, and his calls on government ministers, among them Lord Elgin and John Morley, gave him some insight into the interplay of politics involving the three continents.

The Indian question was well accounted and spread through press that when Gandhi went to India in 1896, his visits and activities were covered by all the major newspapers. The tour planned in the initial years of the campaign chiefly ‘commissioned to educate the public and the authorities in India in regard to the treatment the Indians were receiving in South Africa.’<sup>83</sup> His firm faith was conveyed in his appeal to the Indians for,

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<sup>81</sup>The Women Resolution [ *JO*,10-5-1913], *CWMG*, Vol. XII(1964),p.66 (emphasis added)

<sup>82</sup> Gandhi, Satyagraha, Chapter XL “ Women in Jail”,p.428-433

<sup>83</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II(1976),p.2

“We know we have the sympathy of the public bodies in India, but our object in laying our grievances specially before the Indian public is to enlist the very active sympathy of all the public bodies in India. That is my commission, and our cause is so great and just that I have no doubt I shall return to Natal with satisfactory result.”<sup>84</sup>

The tour turned to be success as the South African Indian cause was well received and reported in almost all the newspapers.<sup>85</sup> This facilitated him in advancing the issue and having favourable gestures from the political circles in India.

Besides India, Gandhi believed that the support and assistance from England was also crucial ‘to develop strength from within’.<sup>86</sup> Steps were taken to gather support from England as fostering relations with the British Committee of Indian National Congress and regular interaction with Dadabhai Naoroji, particularly the thoughtful consideration of Sir William Wilson about the Indian Question became most valuable. As the editor of the Indian section of the *Times*, he discussed the issue in its true perspective through his articles.

## **2.4 Transition from ‘Partisan to Protester’**

The change from a young barrister to ‘a sophisticated political organizer’ and a mass leader was quite perceptible. The depth of this transformation was significant transition from the policy of seeking white’s approval to resisting the white rule.

The newspaper was the true portrayal of the perception and personality of Gandhi, accounting the shifts and changes in his life. As he himself expressed: “So long as it was under my control, the changes in the journal were indicative of changes in my life. *Indian Opinion*...was a mirror of part of my life.”<sup>87</sup>

Gandhi had an unflinching faith in the British justice and character. He emphatically upheld the authority of the British Constitution to govern its colonies and believed that

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.36

<sup>85</sup> Gandhi, *Satyagraha* .p.82

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*.p.104

<sup>87</sup> Gandhi, *Autobiography*.p.210

“the process of unification the flower of the British and the Indian nations are earnestly striving for<sup>88</sup> ...as both the Anglo-Saxon and the Indian races belong to the same stock.<sup>89</sup>

His faith was not impaired even by what Indians had to suffer in South Africa. Gandhi was still sufficiently enamored of the British Empire to write a genuinely warm message of felicitation on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria for expressing his sentiments of loyalty and devotion. His address to the Queen, published in *The Natal Mercury* on June 3, 1897 illustrates it,

Most gracious Sovereign and Empress...In token of our joy at the approaching of the completion of the 60th year of your glorious and beneficent reign, we are proud to think that we are your subjects, the more so as we know that the peace we enjoy in India, and the confidence of security of life and prosperity which enables us to venture abroad, are due to that position. We can but re-echo the sentiments of loyalty and devotion which are finding expression among all your subjects and in all parts of your vast dominions on which the sun never sets. That god Almighty may spare you in health and vigour for a long time to come to reign over us is our devout wish and prayer.<sup>90</sup>

The address was inscribed on a silver shield and bore twenty-one signatures, the last being Gandhi's. As a further tribute, Gandhi inspired the founding of a Silver Jubilee Library to be supported by the Indian community. Shortly after Victoria's death Gandhi went to considerable trouble to see that all Indian school children received a “memorial souvenir” of the reign “of our late beloved Kasier-i-Hind.” Gandhi suggested “that one copy should be framed and hung in the schoolroom, and each pupil should be induced either to frame it, if he can afford it, or neatly paste it on a nice piece of thick cardboard and hang it in his room.”<sup>91</sup> Still later, Gandhi was eloquent on Empire Day. He wrote,

It is but a deeper tribute to her memory that it is becoming known as ‘Empire’ rather than ‘Victoria’ Day; for it is recognition that no person has done more to draw together the units of those vast Dominions to which she was the Queen-Empress. By her large heart and wide sympathy; by her abilities and queenly virtues; above all by her personal goodness as a

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<sup>88</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. I(1958),p.96

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*,p.97

<sup>90</sup> Address to Queen Victoria, *CWMG*, Vol. I(1958),p.317

<sup>91</sup> A Circular Letter : To Heads of Indian Schools, 19 Mar. 1901 ,*CWMG*, Vol. III, p. 178

woman, she has forever enshrined herself in the hearts of every nation under the British flag.<sup>92</sup>

He believed that the British Government was sincere in its support of an imperial philosophy based on racial equality. Despite his many disappointments, he urged Indians to join the army and fight for Britain during World War I. It was at least partly because of this faith that he continued to bombard the Colonial Office with memorials and petitions.

Expressions of loyalty to the Queen did not mean that Gandhi had relaxed his efforts to protect the Indians of Natal from legislation contrary to their interests. Though, this trust limited him in the initial phase to the constitutional mode of protest, as petitions and deputations were sent after every reading of the bills, as commenced with the Franchise Amendment Bill.<sup>93</sup> But it was without much result.

#### ***2.4.1 Systemized Shift in His Perception and of the Newspaper***

There was an evident shift in the approach of the journal which was reflective of the changes in the Gandhian standpoint with the advancement of the movement. Initially, Gandhi emphasized on comprehending and educating the Indian aspirations to the authorities, based on his firm conviction on British justice and values. The first editorial of *Indian Opinion*, 'Ourselves' distinctly expressed his political stance,

The Indians, residents in British South Africa, loyal subjects though they are of the King-Emperor, labour under a number of legal disabilities which, it is contended on their behalf, are undeserved and unjust. The reason of this state of affairs is to be found in the prejudice in the minds of the Colonists, arising out of misunderstanding the actual status of the Indian as a British subject, the close relation that render him kin to Colonists, as the dual title of the Crowned Head so significantly pronounces, and the unhappy forgetfulness of the great services India has always rendered to the Mother Country ever since Providence brought loyal Hind under the flag of Britannia. It will be our endeavour, therefore, to remove the misunderstanding by placing facts in their true light before the public.

We are far from assuming that the Indians here are free from all the faults that are ascribed to them. Wherever we find them to be at fault, we will unhesitatingly point it out and suggest means for its removal. Our countrymen in South Africa are without the guiding influence of the institutions that exist in India and that impart the necessary moral tone

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<sup>92</sup>, Empire Day, *IO*, 27-5-1905, CWMG, IV(1960), p. 449

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p.92-105

when it is wanting. Those that have immigrated as children, or are born in the Colony, have no opportunity of studying the past history of the nation to which they belong, or of knowing its greatness. It will be our duty, so far as it may be in our power, to supply these wants by inviting contributions from competent writers in England, in India, and in this sub-continent.

Time alone will prove our desire to do what is right. But we can do very little unaided. We rely on generous support from the great Anglo-Saxon race that hails His Majesty Edward VII as King- Emperor? For, there is nothing in our programme but a desire to promote harmony and good-will between the different sections of the one mighty empire.<sup>94</sup>

The gradual disillusionment from the system with time and experience, diminished and transferred his reliance from the politics of petitioning and constitutionalism to the political strategies of mass mobilization and moral upliftment of the community. This aversion from the Britishness strengthened with time and experience. Gandhi moved from “petition politics” to defiance by 1907.

In the initial stages of the movement, Gandhi’s approach to the issues was a blend of mild disapproval and reconciliation, as his opinion on the £3 poll tax depicted, “It is a matter of great sorrow that such penalty is inflicted on British subjects; but where there is no remedy, one has to reconcile oneself to the situation.”<sup>95</sup> His stance was visibly shifted in 1909 as he explicitly contented indenture as “evil thing” and urged for “agitation for its removal”.<sup>96</sup>

The progressive disenchantment with the government was often reflective in the columns of *Indian Opinion*. He used to vent out his feeling in his articles, as the failure of Smuts agreement regarding the Asiatic Registration Act in 1908 was well accounted in his piece ‘*Foul Play*’.<sup>97</sup>

It was an extraordinary transformation in Gandhi between 1906 and 1909 that acted as a formative ground for developing the strategies, which became indispensable for his resistance movement. There were many influences on him that stimulated and

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<sup>94</sup> “Ourselves” *JO* 4-6-1903, *CWMG*, Vol. III(1960), p.313

<sup>95</sup> Indentured Indians, [IO, 22-4-1905], *CWMG*, Vol. IV(1960), p.417

<sup>96</sup> *JO*, 11-12-1909, *CWMG*, Vol.X(1963), p. 99-100

<sup>97</sup> “Foul Play”, [IO, 23-5-1908], *CWMG*, Vol.VIII(1962)



revolutionized his intellectual evolution. Besides, the inspiration from Tolstoy, Mazzini, Garrison, Thoreau, there were many contemporary campaigns, as the passive resistance movement waged by the Nonconformist churches in England and Wales against a government tax that had an impressible impact on him.

The discrimination and the undoubted injury to Gandhi's spirit have often been emphasised as crucial factors in the evolution of his career. But, it is interesting to point the continuation of an outward attachment not only to the symbols and institutions of British power, which he could not escape in either Africa or India, but also to the principles and ethos of British civilization. Not until late 1906, when Gandhi took vows of poverty and celibacy and first decided to break legal restraints, it was evident that he had returned to selective aspects of Hindu thought and practice and that he had discarded loyalty to modern European values as represented by British imperial professions of equity and progress. The 1909 publication of his *Hind Swaraj*, conceptualized and confirmed these changes

The "Indian Opinion."

This weekly newspaper is published in four languages, namely: English, Tamil and Hindi in the interests of the British Indians reading in South Africa.

THE POLICY

of the paper would be to advocate the cause of the British Indians in this sub-continent. But while it would insist upon the rights of the community, it would not be slow to point out to its responsibilities also as members of a mighty Empire. It would perfectly endeavour to bring about a proper understanding between the two communities which Providence has brought together under one flag.

THE ADVANTAGES

to the Indian community in subscribing to and supporting this paper would be—

- (1) It would have a newspaper that would advocate its cause as well as give to all sections of it news in their own languages.
- (2) It would contain news especially affecting Indians of all parts of South Africa, besides local and general information.
- (3) It would contain an epitome of events happening in India.
- (4) It would give commercial intelligence.
- (5) It would contain contributions from competent writers, Indian as well as European, on all subjects—Social, Moral, and Intellectual.

The advantages to the European community would be—

- (1) The paper would give it an idea of Indian thought and aspirations.
- (2) It would acquaint it with such Indian matters as are not commonly known to it, and yet which should not be ignored by true Imperialists.
- To Europeans and Indians alike, it would serve as the best advertising medium in those branches of the trade in which Indians are especially concerned.
- The rate of annual subscription is 12s. 6d. in the Colony, and outside the Colony, 17s. payable in advance.
- Single copies are sold at 3d. each.
- Advertising charges can be had on application to the undersigned.

Proprietor, "The Indian Opinion," 113, Grey Street, Capetown.

"The Indian Opinion" is published weekly in four languages: English, Tamil, Hindi, and Afrikaans. It is published by the Proprietor, 113, Grey Street, Capetown.

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Proprietor, "The Indian Opinion," 113, Grey Street, Capetown.

C. R. D. Pillay & Co., P. Parodol Pillay & Co., M. R. N. Pillay, S. S. S. Pillay.

Advertisement Charges

For rates of Advertisement, apply to the Proprietor, 113, Grey Street, Capetown.

The Indian Opinion.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4th, 1903.

COURSE-FEES.

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# Indian Opinion

ઇન્ડિયન ઓપિનિયન

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN ENGLISH AND GUJARATI

No. 45—Vol. XI. WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 27TH, 1913. Published at No. 6, C. C. A. S. Chambers, Fort Street, Calcutta.

## A WEEK OF EXCITEMENT

THE week which ended on the 26th instant will long be remembered as one of tremendous interest to the Indian Community of South Africa. Each day there was reported the rapid development of the strike, and, on Friday last, the news came to hand that Mr. Gandhi had been arrested, things expected to have developed into a storm. From the reports we have received ourselves and the summaries by Reuters and other correspondents, we give as complete a review of the happenings of the week as it is possible in the space and time at our disposal.

Mr. Gandhi went to the Secretary for Justice from Chabotown on the 21st ultimo pointing out that large numbers of Indians had surrounded the offices for arrest and, as the Government had no accommodation for their custody for longer than three days, they were being sent and deposited in the local gaol. He also warned the Government that all the people should be allowed to go, if not, he stated that they would proceed with their march into the Transvaal. He also warned the Government against allowing Indians to remain in the gaol and stated that it was the desire of the public to guard in every way they could against the introduction of a single Indian.

A letter was addressed on the same day by Mr. Gandhi to the Investigation Officer, Pretoria, pointing out that all passive resisters receive at the Transvaal border three days' notice of appeal, although they declare they do not wish to appeal, and that they are allowed to return about as they please. In Mr. Gandhi's opinion, the Act does not require the warning to be given in all circumstances.

On the 22nd instant, the Johannesburg correspondent at Newcastle telegraphed that the Indian passive resisters resident had arrested large numbers.

Over 2,000 Indians were quartered in Newcastle, and a further 500 arrived from Ladysmith the day.

It was feared that an epidemic would result from the crowding together of such a number without proper sanitary precautions. The municipal authorities would, of course, assume any responsibility should an epidemic break out.

So far as the natives themselves are concerned, they

were, and put their premises at the disposal of the resisters. The enclosed newspaper剪报 were used for cooking purposes. All were in safe charge of Mr. Gandhi. The resisters throughout Sunday were most orderly, and there were no disturbances. There have been no further arrests by the police. The 250 arrested by the police on Thursday were all from the Hellenburgh Colliery. A lot of stores have been forwarded from the depot at Newcastle where natives have been detained from various localities in Natal.

Mr. Gandhi, accompanied, stated that he contemplated moving 1,500 men to the Transvaal to court arrest, and if not arrested they would proceed further, and would probably settle down on Mr. Kallenbach's farm at Johannesburg.

At Newcastle the public officials became anxious regarding the danger of such large numbers of Indians congregating in the town and to prevent any serious outbreaks in Newcastle, they immediately on the 25th, Mr. Kallenbach and Lindley attended a meeting in the Council Chamber at which the Mayor, the Health Officer and the Secretary for Justice were present. The Mayor explained that they could not possibly allow them to remain in town under the conditions now prevailing. It was altogether against their sanitary laws, but they were agreeable to allow them to go over the border to Johannesburg.

Mr. Kallenbach said that he would take full responsibility as far as he could, but he could not guarantee absolute control as there were already a large number of people arrived there he expected, and it was impossible to say how many more would come out, and of course, with the increasing number arriving, the difficulties of control would increase accordingly, but he would do all in his power to keep order, and to see that everything was kept as clean as possible. He would arrange to get the water supply cut off from the town, so that he could get his men to lay their beds in the empty rooms, but on this point the Mayor would not agree, as would the Health Officer, who contended that the first claimants upon the water were the citizens of Newcastle, for whom it was provided. The Mayor, however, presented to look into the matter, and for three days on Monday. Meanwhile, they were endeavouring to get moved out of the town to the place selected for them. Mr. Kallenbach explained that he could not let the women and

# इंडियन ओपिनियन.

पृष्ठक २

फ्रीनिक्स—शनिवार, ता. ७ वीं जानेवारी, १९०५.

नम्बर १२.

## सप्ताहिक पंचांग.

दिनांक— ७ वीं जानेवारी, ता. ७  
 जानेवारी १९०५ तक.  
 हिंदू—शुक्र १२ वीं पंच शुक्र १२  
 ७ वीं १९०५ तक.

दिनांक	वृत्त	दिनांक	वृत्त
शनि	७	२५	५१ ५५
रवि	८	२६	५२ ५५
सोम	९	२७	५३ ००
मंगल	१०	२८	५४ ००
बुध	११	२९	५५ ००
गुरु	१२	३०	५६ ००
शुक्र	१३	३१	५७ ५५

## इंडिया जानेवाली मेल स्ट्रीम.

इंडियाई मेल स्ट्रीम 'अभ्रमंजरी' ता. १५ जानेवारी और पांडे सुरत तथा 'अभ्र कुली' ता. ५ फेब्रुवारी और 'विंसे' मुंबई जानेवाली है. यह स्ट्रीम डाक ले जाते है.

## इंडियन ओपिनिअन.

शनिवार, ता. ७ जानेवारी, १९०५.

### सर हेनरी कोटन साहेब का जन्म चरित्र.

सर हेनरी जॉन कोटन क. सी. एम. आइ. का जन्म मद्रास इलाके में कुम्भीकोनम गांव में सन १८४६ में हुआ था. इन साहेबके बापदादे सब बड़े लोग थे. और इस्ट इंडिया कंपनी में इंजीनियर थे. १८९८ वीं सालमें सरकारी नौकरीमें दाखल हुआ और बहुत ही हुंदा मिले थे. यह साहेब रैबन्सु चौडके मेन्टरी थे, बंगालमें सरकारके मेन्टरी थे. योडी मुदन तक इंडिया सरकारके मेन्टरी थे. कलकत्ता की कौन्सिलके प्रमुख थे और आमास

यह साहेब सब हिंदीयोंपर बहु तही प्रीती रखते थे और स्वतंत्र थे. इस लिये उपरी अमलदारकी साथ बहुत अच्छा नहि चला. जब आशाम में यह साहेब थे उस बखत उन्हें आशामके गीरमीटीयों पर बहुत दील सोनी बताया और गरीबोंका बचाव किया था. इसमें प्लॉटर लोग सब गुस्से हुआ और कोटन साहेबकी सामने खटपट उठाई. कोटन साहेबने नौकरी छोड दी. जब इंग्लंड गानके लिये तैयार हुआ तब हिंदी कोमने यह साहेबको बहुत मान दिया और जाकर लॉडे रिपनको मिल्या था.

हाल यह साहेब पारलामेन्टमें दाखल होनेकी तजवीज करने है और हिंदी ओंका भला करनेके लिये बहुत चापल करते है. हिंदी ओंका मददाग्य है कि ऐसा भी पुरुष कौन्सिलके प्रमुखभान पर चिराग्मान भवे.

### पोर्ट अरथर.

पोर्ट आरथर गीरा! यह जमानेमें ऐसा घराब हुआ नहि है. हजारों आदमीयोंकी जान लाम हुई है. दोनों लश्करकी बहादुरी नबरदस्त थी. जनरल स्टोमेटका नाम अमर हो गया है. जनरल नेगीनकी बहादुरी ऐसी है उसकी तारीफ करने लायक हम नहि है. जापानके लडवये ने पण लिया था कि पोर्ट आरथर मर करना चाहिये. यह युद्ध अपनेको पांडव कौरवके युद्धका ख्याल देता है. एक एकमें एक चढ़ते थे. यह घराबमें में अपनेको शिक्षा लेने जेवा है. जापा नौबोका एकत्र और स्पदेशाभिमानके लिये इतना जीत हुए है, तो यह याद रखना चाहिये कि अपने एकत्र रहनेमें

### चत्रचव.

बंगाल उड़ीसा प्रातमें मोरभेज नामक एक देशी रिमायत है. कुछ कालमें यह राज्यमें रेल बन रही थी, अब यह बन चुकी है.

लार्ड मिलेनर दक्षिण अफरिकाके बड़े हाकिम है. सुनते हैं, कि आप अपना पद परित्याग करेंगे और विलायतके स्काटलंड मिक्तर एन्डरु ब्राहम साहेब आपके परिन्यक्त पदपर आसीत होंगे. क्या ब्राहम साहेब अफरिकाके प्रवासी भारतवासीओंका कुछ मंगल करेंगे?

पनाबमें दो लडके शिल्प शिवाके लिये नियायत भेज नवेंगे. भारत सरकार उन्हें वार्षिक १८ सौ रुपयके हिमाबमे वृसि देगा. यदि मनोनीत छात्र चमेडेका काम, कुम्हारका काम, वा धातुका काम, शिल्पेनपर रानी हेगे. तो उनके आंत जौनका खरचा और उस्का अन्यान्य खर्चभी सरकार देगी. पनाबी कभीशनरोपर लडकोंके चुनेने का भार रखा गया है. वे स्थानीय सम्भान्त लोगोंमें परामश करके लडकों को चुनेंगे.

कलकत्ताका 'इंग्लिशमेन' अखबार प्रकाम करता है,—"हालमें चीन सरकार तिब्बतके लामामें प्रतिनिधि भेजने का उद्योग कर रही है. चीन-सरकार अपने विदेश विभागमें बात चीन करके इस प्रतिनिधिका कार्य स्थिर कर रही है. इंग्लिशमेनने यह भी लिखा है, कि चीनके क्याटन नगरमें बहुत बड़ी सजा का एक अधिेशन होगा. सभामें अभिनेके विद्वानमें पणथर और अतधिकार

# ઇંડિઅન ઓપિનિઅન.

પુસ્તક ૨

શીનીચાર, શનીવાર, તારીખ ૭ મી અનેવારી, ૧૯૦૫.

અંક ૩૨.

## અહવાલિક પંચાંગ

ખરેલી—તા. ૭ અનેવારીથી, તા. ૧૩ અનેવારી સુધી, ૫૦ સં. ૧૯૦૫

હિંદી—પોષ શુક્ર ૨ થી, પોષ શુક્ર ૭ સુધી, સંવત ૧૯૫૧.

મુસલમાની—તા. ૩૦ મી સવાલથી, તા. ૧ માં સવાલ સુધી ૧૩૨૨ હીજરી.

વાર	હિન્દી તારીખ	હિંદી તીથી	હિંદી તીથી	મુસલમાની તારીખ	મુસલમાની તારીખ
શનિ	૧	૨	૩	૪	૫
રવિ	૨	૩	૪	૫	૬
સોમ	૩	૪	૫	૬	૭
મંગળ	૪	૫	૬	૭	૮
બુધ	૫	૬	૭	૮	૯
ગુરુ	૬	૭	૮	૯	૧૦
શુક્ર	૭	૮	૯	૧૦	૧૧

## નાવજીવન કાલેન્ડર ઓફ સુડેન

સ્વીડન "અમરુદ્ધી" તારીખ ૧૫ અનેવારી તથા "અમરુદ્ધી" તા. ૫ મી ફેબ્રુઆરી ઉપરથી કોઈપણ યુરોપીય કોલ બોર્ડી કસ્ટોમર કોમ્પાઈ, આસ અમરને વાસ્તે સેમીના એન ડે ઓગ અને સન્ડ, ઉરખન, કેસલબીકોમ વેસ્ટ એન્ટિમાં, તપાસ કરવી અથવા તે સમયે, કોલબોર્ડી સ્વીડનને વલકરી.

હિંદી હિંદી સ્ટોપ નેશીયોનલ કંપની.

કેંક માસ મેવા. મુખ્ય તરફ ત્યજ છે ને કેલોગાએ, બેરા, અને જોગીયાર આમજ નકર કરે છે. વધારે અખરને યારને અમ્યુ, ઇન, અને કંપનીને ત્યાં તપાસ કરવી. કેમજી કમરક્ષિઅસ વેગ, ઉરખન.

## નોટીસ.

આમાર કસ્ટોમર તથા વેચનારોએને અખર આપનામાં આવે છે કે આમાર ક્રેન રીનિઅન લાઇવનામાં આવ્યું છે અને હવેલ નોટીસ કમલો કેમજી કરવી તેમના પત્ર ઉપર ગુન પાલ દેવામાં આવશે.

## ઇંડિઅન ઓપિનિઅન.

શનીચાર, તા. ૭ અનેવારી ૧૯૦૫.

## કરાચીનામાં આવતા મજૂરોની સ્થિતિ.

કરાચીનામાં આવતા હિંદી મજૂરોની સ્થિતિ સાધારણ વાચકમાં કહેવામાં ગીરની ડીઅની સ્થિતિ વિશે વારંવાર દરિયાઈ આવે છે, અને તેઓ અહીં જમણા ડાકાનાં કોલ છે. તેમ તેમની તક દરિયાઈ પર પ્રવૃત્તિ ધ્યાન આપવું નથી, એમ જનાય છે. કરાચીનામાં સરોગ કમુજ કરી તેઓ આવે છે, એટલે થોડી પસ મુલામતોરી કરવા તેઓ બંધાવે આવે હ. હિંદુસ્તાનમાં અનિશય પરીણ છે, તે સાર્યે મેંધચારી વલવી જય છે, એટલે કામો અને કારોગ આમાંએ પોતાનો નિવૈઠ મહામુશીબતથી કરે છે; તેમાં ત્યારે વરસાદ અને રોગથી તજાન થાય છે ત્યારે તે હલ થઈ જાય છે, અને કામો મરીજ આદમી ધરખાર વગરનો યજ જાય છે, અને પોતાની વેદ જગ્ય ગમે તેવી કમલત કરતો પણ સમજવા કે જમણવાની કમલતથી અજાણ્યા વિના ફરે વેસ આવા કોલેજી પણ મળવાની આશાથી ગમે તેવું કામ કરવા ત્યારેમથી અપહા નીકળી પડે છે. એકવાર કામ પડ્યા અને સવાર સાંજ દરમિયાન આવા મજૂરો પછાત તેમને તેમની કિશાનને, કોલ આપાત આવે છે. આવા આપાત અને કમણા વેક પર દરથી વિશેષ કમનાક નહિ થવાનું, અને તેમને કાલકમણ મુલામતી અને કોમરેવનો કાલ મલે એવા કમણુ જેનુંથી નામકાર હિંદી સરકાર ને સરકાર એવા મજૂરોને બોલાવે છે તેની સાથે ખાસ સગ કરે છે કે મજૂર મવાલ તાર સરકારે એક ત્યારે અનસાર રાખવા કે તેની આગળ પોતાનાં ફામ હોય તે તે મજૂરોને, અને તેની શકે તેમ તે અમલદાર મજૂરોની અરજન કરે અને તેનો કસ્ટોમરો વેકનસાદ થવા નહિ રે. હિંદી સરકાર આવી ખાસ માન કરે છે એટલુંજ નહિ, પણ એમ પણ તજવીજ રાખે છે કે તે અમલદારે દર વરસે કરાચીનામાં આવતા તમામ હિંદુસ્તાની સ્થિતિ વિશે વિસમતર ખબર મોકલવી, કે તેમની આનકી થવા

મજૂરો કરવા ગમેતા વેક મુલામતોરીમાં વેકનુ અરજીપત્ર હોય છે. આમાં સમજાવવા મજૂરો કામ કરતાં હોય ત્યાં ત્યાં તે કામકારે અને જહ પૂઠપરહ કરી, તેઓની સગવા તપાસવી, અને કામણુ આપણણુ જણાય તે તે સુધારવાની—અર્થાત, કુદમાં મજૂરોના મેથી તરીકે વતેવાની અમલદારો ફરજ છે, અને તે સુધારવાની રીતે વલક કરે છે તે અને સરકારે એવું એવી સમજૂરી છે. આ પરથી હિંદી સરકાર મજૂરોની આપનામાં પણ કાળજી રાખે છે એમ સાંજ જણાય છે. હવે, આદમી કાળજી હતાં વલ આનમાં સમ્યુ તે પ્રમાણે રાવ છે. તે કાલજી તપાસવાં જોઈએ. આમરી આવી છે કે તે કોલ આરે જોડ સરકારના ક્યાનમાં નહિ હોય, અને તે સજા જતાથી હોય તે, કમણુ મિલિય સરકાર તે જોડ જાતની તરફથી જરૂર સુધારે. એટલે, જે આતોગ હોય તેના કારણ તપાસનાં અને આલમ પડે તે તે વર સરકારને આલ મેંધુ કે એથી અલ તોય મહાકાલ તજવીજને થાય—અમ્ય કરવાની આપણી ફરજ છે.

આજ કોલ કેટલાં વરસ અવાહિં દુરજાનની અરજ હિંદીએને ફરદેલ મજૂરો કરવા કસ્ટોમરોમાં ખલાઈ જવા કે છે એ સમુ કોલ જલે છે કે આ ફરદેલ મિલિય સરકારને બાજ છે, એટલે, મિલિય અમલદારો ફરદેલ મિલિય મજૂરોને જવા કે છે. એમને વિશેરે ફરદેલ હિંદી સરકારને મજૂરો પોતાનાં રાજ્યમાં જવા દેવાની અરજ કરી હતી, પણ ને વિચારી નથી. તેનું કારણ એમ અવાચક છે કે મહોલાં પરવજન એકવાર હિંદી સરકારની હરનો નોરે તે નેથી સરકારનામાં અહીં અવાચક નરે, અને થયી કેમરેમ રખાક નહિ. આપણ એક જમાનાની અમિલદારો છે, કે પુરોપતો મહોલાં રાજ્યોન મજૂરો મેળવતા તજવીજ કરે છે; અને આમ તજવીજ કરવાનું કારણ એ કે પુરોપોએનો સાથે થાજ સંપાદનાં આવવાં મલકોમાં મુલામતોરી વલન નામુદ થઈ ગઈ છે. નહનનું મજૂરો વિના દેશની આપણાની થમ નહિ અને નેથીજ ફરદેલના મેજમાં મજૂર એક તજાક પાલ છે. હિંદીઓને નિયમ એવો છે કે મામલ અરજીપત્ર પવર વિતારી કરી તમામ અખર થાય છે એટલે તેને મહોલાં મજૂરોની નીચતા કાલ આ કમજી અખર થઈ, તે વેકને તજાકોરી, ના થવા અને

# இந்தியன் ஓபினியன்.

வாரமொருமுறை பிரசுரிக்கப்படும்.

செட்டால் பிரிசுக்ஸ் 1905ஆம் ஆண்டில் 7௨ சனிசுழமை

**புதிய சாஸ்திரம்**  
செட்டால் வட்டத்தில் உள்ள பஞ்சாயத்துகளைப் பற்றிய விவரம்.

பஞ்சாயத்து	பெரிய பஞ்சாயத்து	சிறிய பஞ்சாயத்து
செட்டால்	25	25
செட்டால்	25	25
செட்டால்	98	23
செட்டால்	1	2

**மார்க்கட் விலை**

பொருள்	முதல் விலை	இரண்டாம் விலை
செட்டால்	18.6	10-
செட்டால்	1-4-	1-5-
செட்டால்	10-	10.6
செட்டால்	15.0	16-
செட்டால்	15-	15.0
செட்டால்	8.0	8.9
செட்டால்	3.6	2.8
செட்டால்	2.7	2.8
செட்டால்	2.8	2.10.5
செட்டால்	1-7.0	1-2.8
செட்டால்	1-0-0	1-1-
செட்டால்	13.0	14.6
செட்டால்	10.3	10.8
செட்டால்	6	6
செட்டால்	5	6
செட்டால்	3-7-0	3-10-
செட்டால்	10.5	10.8

**விவரங்கொள் -**  
இப்பத்திரிகையின் கை

வியாபகாரர்கள் சென்றவ குடித்திற்குச் சேவையை ய கையாப்பத் தொகையும் நிகழும் வருஷத்தின் தொ கையும் தாமதஞ்சொய்யாம ல் அனுப்பும்படி வணக்க மாகக் கேட்டுக்கொள்ளப்ப டுவேறு.

வகையாப்பக் காரர்களுக்கு வாரந்தொறும் பத்திரிகைகி டைக்காமலிருந்தால் தயவு செய்து பத்திராதிபருக்கு அதுவியைந்தைத் தெரியப் படுத்தும்படி கேட்டுக்கொள் றுகிறோம்.

**இந்தியன் மெயில்.**

செட்டால் வட்டத்தில் 15௨௫௫ அ ம்தான் ஜனவரி 1905 ஆம் ஆ ண்டில் பிரசுரிக்கப்பட்ட இந்தியா யுக்கு புறப்படும்

**“இந்தியன் ஓபினியன்” பிரிசுக்ஸ் செட்டால் 1905ஆம் ஆண்டில் 7௨**

**இந்தியன் ஓபினியன்.**

இந்தியன் ஓபினியன் என்ற பத்திரிகையானது ஏற்கனவே ப திரிசெட்டால் வட்டத்தில் பிரசுரிக்க ப்பட்டுவருகின்றது. அப்பத்திரி கையின்க்கு அதிகப்பிரசாரை எடு த்து முன்னாள் காலங்களில் ப திரிசெட்டால் வட்டத்தில் சேவையை செய்து வந்திருந்த சேவையாளர்களுக்கு இவ்வு குறிக்கோல்களை ப்ற பத்திரிகை வாயிலாகக் கு றகாளுகப்படுவதுண்டு. ஆனால் இ ப்பத்திரிகையை ஆரம்பிக்கும்போ து அது சம்பந்தித்த பொருளை யும் இன்னமேலும் அதிகப்பிரசாரை யுட்கொண்ட பொருளை இ

ந்த ஆசிரியர் செவையாளர், நீதா இச்செட்டால் பிரிசுக்ஸ், இந் தியா வட்டம் இன்னமும் பி ரதேசங்களிலிருக்கும் அதிகாரி யுக்களுக்கு 500 பத்திரிகைகளை யில் இவ்வகை அளிக்கப்பட்டு ப திரிசெட்டால் அதிகப்பிரசாரை இந் தியா, மேலும், டர்வணிலும், ஜெ ருமாவிலும் இருமுள்ள கால்கிரஸ் சபையினர் கொஞ்சநடை சே கரித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கிறது. அந் தது பொதுமக்களின், தன் பத் திரிசெட்டால் இன்னமேலும் அதிக னையும் செய்யுமா. இப்பொது டர் வணிகம் பிரிசுக்ஸ் என்னுமிடத் தில் அதிக கட்டிடமொன்று கட்ட னென்ற யதில் லைபிரரிக்கப்பட்டு இருக்கிறது. இவ்வ ஆசிரியர் வெ ள்விப்புகளும் இந்தியாவுள்ள வெ ள்விப்புகளும் இப்பொது இப்பொ து வெளிப்பாட்டுகளை நுணர்ச்சி யுடைய மொழிமொழியான, அவ்வகையி டைய சம்பளம் அவ்வகையின் தீவ னைத்திருப்ப பொதுமக்கள் திரு ப்பதிப்பாட்டுகளை. அதுவாய் ப்ற பத்திரிகையின் இருப்பவர்களுக் கு ஒவ்வொரு சக்கர் சிவமும் அதிக ளமாகக் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. அவர்கள் வெளிப்பாட்டுகளை விடும் குமியென்று சிவமும் விட்டிவிட்ட வெளிப்பாட்டுகளை விடும் குமியெ ன்று கட்டிடக்கலைக்கட்டி அகல க்கை வெளிப்பாட்டுகளுக்காக வி டப்பட்டது. வருஷம் ஒருமுறை ஆ ரிசுக்ஸ் கணக்குப்படுத்து வாய் தை பத்திரிகைகளுக்கு வித்யா யகர்ந்துகொடுக்கப்படுகிறது. இதிலு க்கலத்தாயிரக்காலில் தர் பத்திரி கையுடைய வட்டம், தான், இப்பொ துமும் இந்த ஆசிரியர் இந் தி லுள்ளமொழி கருத்துகளுக்கெ ன்று சம்பளம் பெறும், தான் இந் தியா வட்டம் வெளிப்பாட்டுகளை இப்பத்திரிகையின் பத்திரிகை

FIRST PAGE OF 'INDIAN OPINION' (TAMIL) IN ITS REDUCED FORMAT

## *R*ole of the Other Press during the Movement

**“I believe that a struggle which relies upon internal strength cannot be wholly carried on without a *newspaper*.”<sup>1</sup>**

The significantly substantial role of the press was largely responsible for triumph of Gandhi's political activism in South Africa. The domain of propaganda was chiefly managed through the newspapers. The petitions, memorandums, deputations etc. addressed to the authorities were publicized in press which developed awareness and public opinion, and facilitated in exerting pressure.

As *Indian Opinion* held a pivotal position in Gandhi's movement, his contemporary newspapers also provided adequate grounds for advancing the struggle. His contemporaries in the realm of printed words both the European-owned press as *The Johannesburg Star*, *The Natal Witness*, *The Pretoria News*, *The Johannesburg Illustrated Star*, *The Natal Advertiser*, *The Times of Natal*, *The Star*, *The Natal Almanac*, etc., and the Indian papers as *The Times of India*, *The Statesman*, *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*, *Englishman*, *The Kesari*, *The Hindu*, *The Madras Times*, etc., immensely helped him in highlighting the Indian cause and awaken consciousness in South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> M. K. Gandhi (1928), *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Madras: S. Ganesh, Publisher, p.221

### **3.1 Position, Perception of the Other Press**

The perception and viewpoint of the contemporary press was significant for Gandhi's movement. The struggle was based on the pressure and persuasion of the people and for that the newspapers were largely instrumental in building public opinion.

The 'sympathetic spirit' and 'influential support' of few newspapers as *The London Times* and *The Times of India* facilitated the struggle in an immeasurable manner and raised them higher in the 'estimation of the Europeans in South Africa'. Newspapers as *The Transvaal Times* under Albert Cartright, a liberal European had amiable relations with Gandhi and often supported the Indian cause.

Gandhi reflected on the general opinion of South African Indians in the press through his published pamphlet entitled "*The Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa*" that detailed the sufferings of the Indians in Natal. They were reviled as "*Ramysammy*," "*Mr. Samy*," or "*Mr. Coolie*" and they were referred to "as the Asian dirt to be heartily cursed," or "a thing black and lean and a long way from clean." Indians were damned, spat upon, pushed off public footpaths and out of trams, railway compartments, and hotels.

#### ***3.1.1 On Indian Question***

Different newspapers had varied approaches towards Indian Question. They gave wide portrayal of varied viewpoints. A general perception of the South African Indians was reflected in these newspapers.

There was an indirect and sometimes direct emphasis on their success in trade which created a general discomfort among the European community about their commercial prosperity as they were giving stiff competition to them. The papers, especially *The Natal Mercury* of 6-7-'94 and *The Natal Advertiser* of 15-9-'93 raised objections against Indians that "they are successful traders, and that, their mode of living being very simple, they compete with European trader in petty trade."<sup>2</sup> These considerations were manifested in the fear that the Indian vote would soon swamp the European. Gandhi replied to the

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<sup>2</sup> "Open Letter", *CWVG*, Vol.II(1959)



*Advertiser* on 29 September 1893<sup>3</sup> that it was at best 'a chimera'. There would never be, he contended, an appreciable number of Indians possessed of the necessary qualifications for registration on the voters' roll. As for Indians not being sufficiently civilized to vote, Gandhi pointed to the numbers of Indians holding high positions in the Government of India. Finally, he invoked what he called "The Magna Charta of the Indians", the Queen's Mutiny Proclamation, which had so strongly implied the sharing by Indians of equal rights with white subjects of the Crown.

There were instances even of explicit expression of anti-Indian sentiments. *The Natal Advertiser*, which at one time proposed the formation of an anti-Asiatic league, strongly dealt with the Indian question in an article, dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 1895, "The general opinion existing throughout South Africa, as regards Indian immigration, may be summed up in the words, " *We don't want them*".<sup>4</sup>

Some Indians were also looked through different lenses. If they were object of acute hatred for some, some attempt to perceive them favourably. The *Cape Times* gave a strong objective portrayal of the position of Indians in South Africa,

"Natal presents the curious spectacle of a country entertaining a supreme contempt for the very class of people she can least do without. Imagination can only picture the commercial paralysis which would inevitably attend the withdrawal of the Indian population from that colony. And yet the Indians is the most despised of creatures."<sup>5</sup> (5-7-1891)<sup>5</sup>

The grave discrimination and injustice crystallized in the legislations of the government induced even the newspapers which 'by no means favourable towards the Indians'. As *the Natal Advertiser*, dated May 16, 1895, expressed regarding the unreasonable aspect of the annual tax of £3 , against those Indians who 'fail to return to India',

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<sup>3</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.I(1958), p. 78-80

<sup>4</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II(1959), p.30(emphasis added)

<sup>5</sup> Speech at Meeting, Madra, *CWMG*, Vol.II(1959)p.111

A broad question, however, is raised by this proposal to establish a special tax on the Coolie settlers...To especially select the Coolies for attention in this way, and to allow all other *aliens* to settle with impunity, and without disability, is not an equitable arrangement. The practice of taxing *aliens*, if it is to be inaugurated at all, should surely commence with those races not under the British Flag in their native land, and not with those who, whether we like the fact or not, are the subjects of the same Sovereign as ourselves. These should be the last, not the first, to be placed by us under exceptional disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.2 On Gandhi

In the initial phase of Gandhi's politics, he was observed as a politically just and wise representative of Indians in the quarters of the European press. He was noticed and appreciated for his moderate tone in politics among the major newspapers. The leading newspaper of Johannesburg, *The Star*, appreciated Gandhi for writing 'forcibly, moderately and well' and for 'questions he had raised with conspicuous moderation.'

His service to the British in the Boer War was acknowledged not only among the official circles but also received favourable reviews in the press. The European press had all praises for the Indians contribution to the war and greeted them as the '*Sons of the Empire*'. Vere Stent, the editor of the *Pretoria News*, gave a portrait of enthusiastic Gandhi on the battlefield, "Every man in Buller's force was dull and depressed, and damnation was heartily invoked on every thing. But Gandhi was stoical in his bearing, cheerful and confident in his conversation and had a kindly eye."<sup>7</sup>

Both the *Natal Mercury* and the *Natal Witness*, Natal's two leading newspapers, although first identified Gandhi as an unwelcome and unacknowledged representative, later wrote frequent editorials lauding him, The *Witness* conceded:

There are many Indians of the stamp of Mr. Gandhi who are doubtless eminently qualified to exercise the fullest possible franchise in any self-governing community. But with all possible deference to such authorities as Schopenhauer, Macaulay, and Max

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<sup>6</sup> CWMG, Vol. I(1958), p.220

<sup>7</sup> Nanda, *Mahatama Gandhi*, p.50

Miiller, the fact remains that for Natal to admit an equality which does not exist in fact and could not be safely admitted even if it did, would be foolish.<sup>8</sup>

The *Mercury*, for its part, was unstinting in its praise. “What we want,” the paper explained on 6 June 1896, “is a European Mr. Gandhi to come forward and put life and movement into the dry bones of our political ideas. It is all the more necessary that we should have something of the kind, when we have an example like the Indian Congress before us.” On another occasion, the *Mercury* delivered itself of the opinion that,

“Mr. Gandhi writes with calmness and moderation. He is as impartial as any one could expect him to be, and probably a little more so than might have been expected, considering that he did not receive very just treatment at the hands of the Law society [which had opposed Gandhi's admission as an advocate to practice before the Supreme Court] when he first came to the Colony”.<sup>9</sup>

Gandhi was not only attracting attention in the colonial press, he was arousing active animosity in official circles. The governor blamed Indian opposition to the proposed franchise restriction act exclusively on Gandhi. During one Assembly debate a member, Mr. Maydon, remarked that Gandhi was only opposing a bill for personal “political advantage.” “He is a discredited person”, the honorable member stated, “among the class which he is seeking to benefit, and beyond that he loses if he fails to fight the battle, the direct personal gain of receiving reward for the battle which he fights, consequently whether he wins or loses, he has everything to gain by fighting.”<sup>10</sup>

These diverging viewpoints exhibited and conveyed the presence of different responses to the Indian politics. It was instrumental in assessing the influence and impact of their activism.

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<sup>8</sup>The *Natal Witness*(quoting the *Johannesburg Star*) 4 Jan. 1895, Robert A Huttenback,(1967), “Some Fruits of Victorian Imperialism: Gandhi and the Indian Question in Natal, 1893-99,” *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 11, No., p.157

<sup>9</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.II(1959), p.36

<sup>10</sup> *Natal Hansard*, 11 May 1896,quoted in Huttenback, ‘Victorian Imperialism’, p.157

### 3.1.3 Changing Attitudes

With the progress of the campaign, there was an evident change in the attitude of South African newspapers which was consequential in creating consciousness about the Indians question.

Mr. Leger, the editor of '*Cape Times*' became an ardent champion of the Indian cause and highlighted it through his paper. In an article, *The Cape Times*, dated 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1889, communicating the real cause of prejudice against Indians, put forth,

“The injustice to the Indians is so glaring that one is almost ashamed of one’s countrymen in wishing to have these men treated as natives, simply because of their success in trade. The very reason that they have been so successful against the dominant race is sufficient to raise them above that degrading level.”<sup>11</sup>

The *Natal Advertiser* which was ‘under European management’ at one time was violently against the Indian cause. But the paper showed visible streaks of changed perception and supported the Indian issue. Though dealing the question from the ‘imperial standpoint’, it argued,

“It will, therefore, probably yet be found that the removal of the drawbacks at present incidental to the immigration of Indians into British Colonies is not to be effected so much by the adoption of the obsolete policy of exclusion as by an enlightened and progressive application of ameliorating laws to those Indians who settle in them.”<sup>12</sup>

With the increased momentum and wide publicity of the ‘Indian *Satyagraha*’ of the struggle, there a conspicuous positive shift in the attitude of the South Africa, newspapers such as *The Friend of Bloemfontein*, *The Transvaal Leader*, *Pretoria news*, *The Cape Times*, *The Natal Mercury*, etc., advise the Government in an explicit tone that ‘it ought to amend the law and arrive at a settlement with the Indians. They all assert that, if the Government does not reach a settlement, it will do injury to the British Empire and rouse

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<sup>11</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II (1959), p.50.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* ; “Speech at Meeting, Madras”, p.115

Indians.’ Newspapers like *The Star* which were overtly hostile to the movement at the outset shifted to take “a middle course” with the advancement of the struggle. There was perceptible change in its attitude as it exhibited respect for ‘the courage of the Indians, acknowledging in them unsuspected qualities of shining worth. One after another, correspondents come out in our favour in the readers’ columns of Johannesburg newspapers. Among them are prominent people who assert that the local Government is bound to seek a settlement.’<sup>13</sup>

Thus, these printed columns acted as a barometer assessing and measuring the pressures and working of the forces in the political space of South Africa.

## **3.2 Role**

### ***3.2.1 Propaganda and Public Opinion***

The domain of propaganda was chiefly managed through the newspapers. The petitions, memorandums, deputations etc. addressed to the authorities were publicized in press which developed awareness and public opinion, and facilitated in pressurizing them. Gandhi remarked on the working of the newspapers in a letter to Dadabhai Naoroji regarding the spread of awareness, ‘Though the Government is silent, the papers have been informing the public that the franchise Bill has been disallowed by her majesty.’<sup>14</sup>

### ***3.2.2 Reflections on the Politics and Protest***

#### **3.2.2.1 Political Reporting**

The newspapers whether colonialists’ or otherwise, provided reports of the developments and happenings in the political arena of South Africa. Interestingly, the political activism among the Indians was commenced with a published report in the *Natal Mercury*, entitled “Indian Franchise”, which stimulated them for immediate action.

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<sup>13</sup> “Johannesburg Letter”, *CWMG*, Vol. VII, 47, p.80-81

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji, *CWMG*, Vol. II(1959), 56,p.192

The newspapers were reflective on all the legislations and their politics. The working of a law related to the system of passes was accounted in *The Natal Advertiser* (19<sup>th</sup> June, 1895), “When they are walking on their grounds, the policeman came and arrest them and ask for their free passes. When they call out for their wives or relatives to produce the passes, before they can be produced the policemen begin to drag the Indians to the police station.”<sup>15</sup>

The activities of the Gandhian movement were mostly reported by all the major newspapers. But these articles were not always reflective of a neutral or appreciative gesture to the campaign. Many times some of them expressed their biased stance through their journalistic pieces, providing misleading information on the issue. The protest of the Indian community on the Asiatic Draft Ordinance in 1906 was not approved by a newspaper as an appreciable endeavour, which was exhibited in the article published by *The Star* that the protest was not “judiciously” led and the community had no case to push the campaign against the Ordinance as it was just a matter of fresh registration and it imposes no fresh disabilities on anyone. It was responded with appropriate reason by the community.<sup>16</sup>

These distorted reports created apprehensions and misconceptions which often proved detrimental for the co-existence of the Indians with other communities. The Reuters reporting about Gandhi’s Indian tour and his *Green Pamphlet* in 1896, which was an ‘exaggerated summary’ of his views and speeches in India, was misinterpreted enough to create sizeable discontent among the Europeans in Natal. The report, which stated that Gandhi had claimed that Indians were robbed and assaulted in Natal, combined with rumors concerning the meetings he had addressed in Bombay and Madras enraged the settlers. It led to demonstrations against Gandhi and Indian community which assured anti-Indian legislation and restrictions on them to enter, trade and settle in Natal.

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<sup>15</sup> *CWMG*, Vol.II(1959),p.11

<sup>16</sup> [The Star 22-9-1906], *CWMG*, Vol. V.,pp.429-430

In actual fact, the pamphlet contained nothing that Gandhi had not stated many times in Natal itself. The editors of the *Mercury*, after actually reading it, admitted on 18 September 1896:

Mr. Gandhi, on his part and on behalf of his countrymen, has done nothing that he is not entitled to do, and from his point of view, the principle he is working for is an honourable and legitimate one. He is within his rights, and so long as he acts honestly and in a straightforward manner, he cannot be blamed or interfered with. So far as we know, he has always done so, and his latest pamphlet, we cannot honestly say, is an unfair statement of the case from his point of view. Reuters' cable is a gross exaggeration of Mr. Gandhi's statement.<sup>17</sup>

Though, most of the colonists still preferred to believe Reuters, there were some sections in the South African Press who were able to perceive the justness of the Indian claims.

There were objectionable Acts as the Immigration Restriction and Franchise Acts, but by far the most insidious piece of legislation passed in the period 1896-97 was Natal Act No. 18 of 1897, "To amend the law relating to licenses to wholesale and retail dealers," which made all applicants for trading licenses or renewal of trading licenses subject to municipal licensing officers to be appointed by the corporations. By means of this act, the Municipalities of Natal expected to rid themselves of Indian merchants whom they accused of underselling Europeans as a consequence of the low wages they paid and whom they belaboured, on the other hand, for offering a salary "so handsome that several lady assistants in the large drapery establishments in town express a determination to put their pride in their pockets and suffer the indignity of being in the employ of an Arab".<sup>18</sup>

The prejudiced perception of European press often use to surface in their biased remarks regarding the personal and professional domain of Indians. They opined that 'contributing equally to the advantage the "Arab" enjoyed in commerce was the money-saving filth and misery'. Yet a writer in *The Witness* intoned: "These Arabs are becoming luxurious. The other day I saw a fine sight, in the shape of an Arab, with his longskirted, turbaned family, lolling on the cushions of a large open carriage drawn by a pair of good

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Huttenback, 'Victorian Imperialism', p.160

<sup>18</sup> Pyarelal, (1962) "Gandhiji and the African Question" *Africa Quarterly*, 11(2),p. 475

horses. The white aristocrats of this town revel in coolie coachmen. Soon we will find our Arab friends employing white men to sit on the box decked out in all the glory of boots, buttons and breeches.”<sup>19</sup>

These were interesting reporting which mirrored the existent views among the sections represented through their press. In one instance, the *Daily Mail* compared the Indians act of defiance of putting their registration certificates in flames with the ‘Boston Tea Party’.

### **3.2.2.2 Government’s Opinion**

Some newspapers as *The Natal Mercury*, the Government organ in Natal, helped to communicate and express the government’s views. It went on to justify the government’s stance and measures. *The Natal Mercury* exhibiting the Governmental perception, facilitated to comprehend the orientation and strategy that worked behind different official measures and enactments of the authorities. In one instance, *The Natal Mercury* defended the official stance on the Indian question, arguing the righteous sentiments behind it:

This much, however, the Government cannot accede to, that men who contract at fair wages to assist the Colonists, should be allowed to break their contract, and remain competitors against the Colonists, those whom, and for on other purpose and no other condition , they came to serve. To do otherwise would be to destroy all distinction between right and wrong and to give tacit disavowal of the existence of law and equity.”<sup>20</sup>

Gandhi found it very valuable, particularly in the early stages of his politics when he had deep rooted faith in the British sense of justice.

### **3.2.2.3 Documentation of the Impact**

The press documented the general environs and experiences of the colonies which facilitated in assessing the consequential impact of governmental measures. The conditions of Indians under the discriminatory regime was well accounted. The following

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Pyarelal, pp. 475-476

<sup>20</sup> “Petition to Mr. Chamberlain”, *CWMG*, Vol. I(1958) p.219



is the position of the Indians in East Griqualand under the Cape Government, according to *the Mercury* of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1896,

“An Arab named Ismail Suliman, erected a store in East Griqualand, paid customs upon goods and applied for a license, which the Magistrate refused. Mr. Attorney Francis, on the Arab’s behalf, appealed to the Cape Government who upheld the Magistrate and have issued instructions that no Coolies or Arabs are to have trading licenses in East Griqualand and the one or two that have licenses are to be closed up.”<sup>21</sup>

It contributed in exploring and exposing the vested interests of the government behind its policies, which helped to gather support against the official measures. These reports were particularly advantageous in raising questions about the condition of Indians in South Africa.

### ***3.2.3 Platform for Debates***

The newspapers provided an open platform for debates in the political circles. The introduction of the Franchise Bill in Natal in 1893 fuelled a heated debate in which press provided an appropriate forum for it. As on the question of the Franchise Amendment Bill, the *Natal Mercury*, dated 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1896, attempted to defend the government’s move, “as the past experience has proved that the class of Indians coming here, as a rule, do not concern themselves about the franchise and further that the majority of them do not even possess the small property qualification required.”<sup>22</sup> Though, it later guardedly but bluntly stated the real reason,

“Rightly or wrongly, justly or unjustly, a strong feeling exists among the Europeans in South Africa..., against Indians or any other Asiatic being allowed unrestricted rights to the franchise...We do not want isolation again under the far greater and more fatal ban of being a semi-Asiatic country out of touch and put of harmony with the other European Governments of the country.”<sup>23</sup> (22-4-1896)

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<sup>21</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II(1959), p.26

<sup>22</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II(1959), p.15

<sup>23</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II .p.15

The developments and debates related to governmental bills and measures were fairly expressed in the newspapers, reflecting variant viewpoints. When the disfranchisement bill was passed it was received differently, as it was condemned by the colonists' and other newspapers as 'inadequate.' Some, such as the *London Times* disputed it, stating that, "the argument that he (the Indian) has no franchise whatever in India is inconsistent with facts."<sup>24</sup>, and asserted the Indians' claim on franchise rights, putting forth that, "We cannot afford a war of races among our own subjects...It would be as wrong...for Natal to deny the rights of citizenship to British Indian subjects who, by years of thrift and good work in the colony, have raised themselves to the actual status of citizens."<sup>25</sup> Thus, the newspapers opened an appropriate sphere for debate which exposed the claims based on vested interests.

### ***3.2.4 Political Activism***

Press was an important component and also a significant participant in the political activism in South Africa. The newspapers raised different issues conforming to their viewpoints.

The *Mercury* and the *Witness* collaborated to support the three major acts passed by the Legislative Assembly in 1896-97: the Immigration Restriction Act, the Franchise Act, and the Licensing Act. On 29 January 1895 the *Mercury* wrote that "the awakening of the Colonists to the danger of being swamped by a low-class population was only the first practical step towards the complete solution of a question that must of necessity be transmitted to the next generation."

The *Witness* of 25 March 1893 emphasized the colonists' prior responsibility to the native population: "The Indian rubbish which is being shot upon these shores is more and more appropriating the charitable funds of this country and matters have reached the state at which we are turning out our own family, in which we include the native aboriginal

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, p.16

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, p.17-18

population, to starve in order to make room for and entertain those who have no claim upon us.”

On 7 January 1897 the *Witness* urged for the establishment of separate locations for Indians. It claimed later (on 15 March) that as the Immigration Restriction Act had not sufficiently protected the Colony of Natal from the “Arabs.” It pointed to the fact that the Indians in Natal were sinking into more desperate position, as even the sections from press armed up against the Indians.

### **3.3 Other Indian Press**

Though the Indian media space during this period was dominated by the Gandhi, few other newspapers also came to stage.

#### ***3.3.1 African Chronicle***

P. S. Aiyar, who was a founding member of Natal Indian Patriotic Committee (NIPU) and the Indian Committee, initiated a Tamil-English weekly, the *African Chronicle* in 1908. It was started with four pages in English and eight pages in Tamil, later the ratio was changed to eight to eight. It was welcomed and well received by the “Indian farmers, hawkers and fruiterers” as it satisfied their “long felt want”.

The paper was not an exclusive domain of political issues, but was also reflective of the socio-cultural needs of its readers. Bhana and Vahed observes that it was ‘particularly strong on cultural events relating to Tamil-speaking immigrants and promoted the study of Tamil as a language.’ The Tamil *Panchangam* appeared regularly after the Tamil New Year in April 1910.<sup>26</sup> This gave a multidimensional face to the journal which covered a wide range of subjects as news about sports and social activities, religious festivals as

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<sup>26</sup> Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005), *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors. p.21

Muharram and Thai Poosum (Kavady), a regular column on education and physical culture, a column on humour and for a special column for woman.

Like *Indian Opinion*, it also focused on patriotic events and nationalist leaders in India.

### **3.3.2 Indian Views**

*Indian Views* was a Gujarati-English newspaper launched by Mahomed Cassim Anglia in Durban in July 1914. He was a long time supporter and associate of Gandhi. But, later his disagreement with the Gandhi-Smuts Settlement led him to start this paper in opposition to *Indian Opinion*. He even founded the Natal Indian Association which was also the mark of discord with the Natal Indian Congress. It gave a well documented record of Gandhi and his oppositional politics.

### **3.3.3 Their Role**

These newspapers provided strength and support to the 'common cause' and supplemented for the inadequacies emerged in the campaign. *African Chronicle*, being a Tamil-English newspaper, provided respite to the sizeable Tamil readers of the community who the formed the base of the movement. *Indian Opinion*, despite Gandhi's earnest efforts to learn the language, failed to cater their needs. It continued to provide detailed news in Gujarati. *African Chronicle* supported Gandhi's passive resistance movement in the Transvaal, and helped his press by translating Gandhi's speeches into Tamil and sent copies for its distribution among the community.

#### **3.3.3.1 Struggle for Indian Rights**

These Indian newspapers were also active participants of the ongoing struggle for Indian rights. In 1911 *African Chronicle* launched a vigorous campaign for the abolition of the £3 tax. It was well responded by Gandhi and Natal Indian Congress.

#### **3.3.3.2 Diverging Viewpoints**

Like *Indian Opinion*, these newspapers aimed to cater the interests of the Indian community. But they maintained their separate and discrepant stances on certain issues with the Gandhi's journal. *Indian Opinion* had long initiated the movement to end the system of indentured labourers<sup>27</sup>, but *African Chronicle* did not campaign for the termination of indentured immigration, contenting that it was more important to see that workers were not ill-treated.<sup>28</sup>

Though, these newspapers supported the Gandhian campaign, their diverging viewpoints surfaced in the end of his *Satyagraha*. They disapproved and held a variant stand on the Gandhi-Smut settlement. *African Opinion* and *Indian Views* criticized the settlement as "limited" and "negotiated" after seven years of struggle. Uma Mesthrie argues that these contenting stances exhibit that "*Indian Opinion* thus reflected one point of view – Gandhi's view – and played a key role in portraying him as a successful leader."<sup>29</sup>

### 3.4 The Impact on the Movement

Throughout the struggle, particularly before the arrival of *Indian Opinion*, the other contemporary press had been instrumental in advancing the Indian cause. Gandhi acknowledged their role in furthering and contributing meaningful dimensions to the campaign. The support from outside South Africa, especially India and England, was of immense worth, as he observed that,

The want of knowledge about India is so great in South Africa that the people would not even believe us if we said that India is not dotted by huts. The work done on our behalf by the *London Times*, the British Committee of the Congress in London, and in India by *The Times of India*, has borne fruit already.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [IO, 15-6-1907], *CWMG*, Vol. VII, 1907, p. 42-43

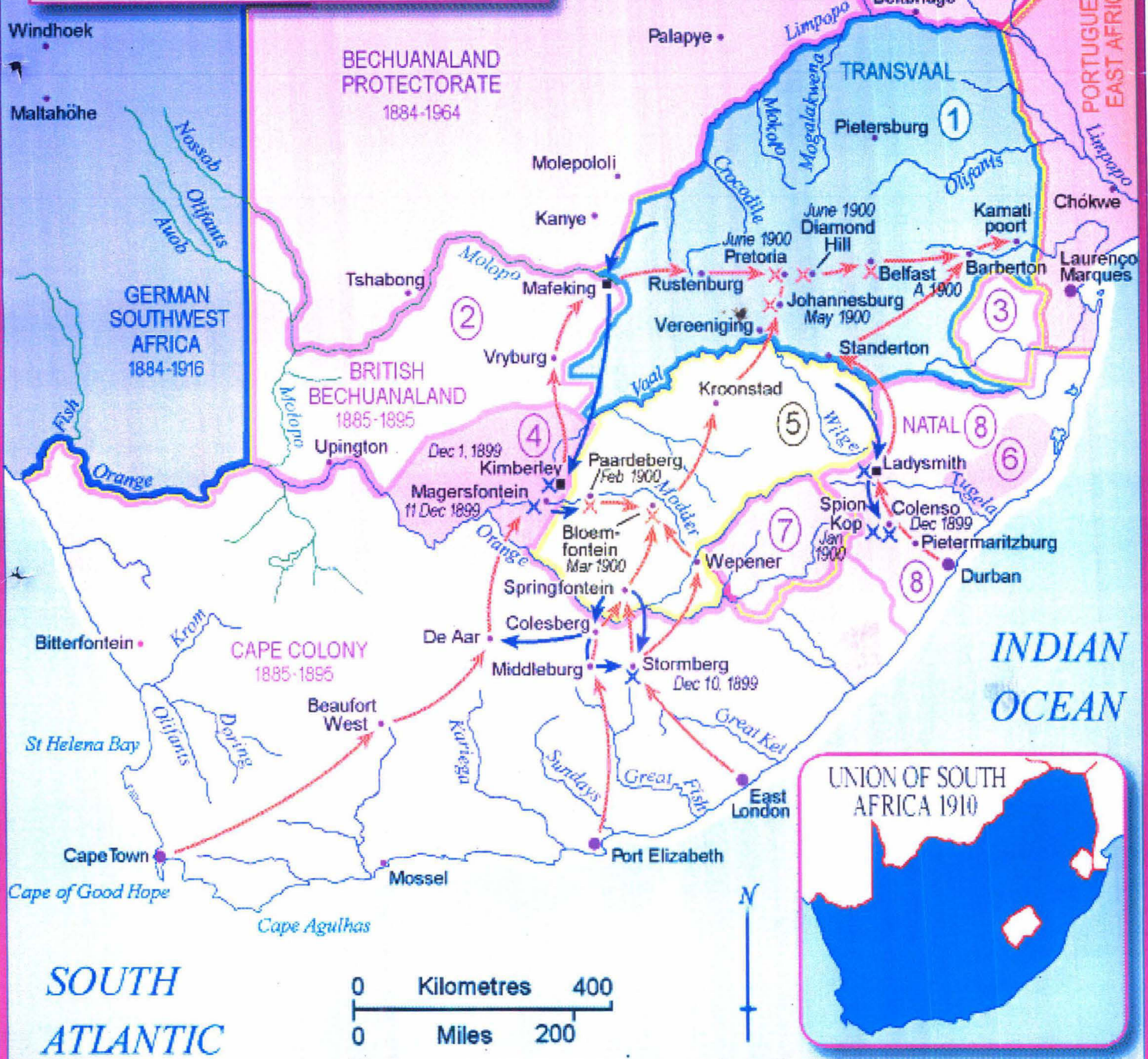
<sup>28</sup> Uma Shashikant Mesthrie, "From Advocacy to Mobilization: *Indian Opinion*, 1903-1914", in Les Switzer (ed.), (1997), *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance 1880-1960s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.114

<sup>29</sup> Mesthrie, *op. cit.*, p.121

<sup>30</sup> *CWMG*, Vol. II, "The Grievances of the British Indians in South African : An Appeal to Indian Public, p.29

# SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1910

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- (1) Sth African Republic (Transvaal), annexed by British 1904
- (2) Annexed 1885, absorbed into Cape Colony 1895
- (3) Swaziland. British Protectorate from 1907 to 1967
- (4) Griqualand West, absorbed into Cape Colony 1880
- (5) Orange Free State 1854-1901. Brit Orange River Colony 1901-10
- (6) Zululand, annexed by British 1881, absorbed by Natal 1907
- (7) Basutoland. British Protectorate from 1884

- (8) Natal, annexed by British 1843, Crown Colony 1856-1910
  - Towns under siege – Mafeking, Oct 1899 to May 1900
  - X Boer victories – Kimberley, Oct 1899 to Feb 1900
  - x British victories – Ladysmith, Nov 1899 to Feb 1900
  - ➡ Boer troop movement or major offensive
  - British troop movement or major offensive
- Stormberg Dec 10, 1899      Approx date of engagement

## **Gandhi's Press and Protest: Assessing the Interface and its Outcomes**

*"Satyagraha would have been impossible without Indian Opinion."*

**-M. K. Gandhi**

Gandhi's departure from South Africa in 1914 marked his physical exit from the place, but he left a legacy, a tradition for which he became the most remembered Indian for them. He left behind a newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, a tradition of constructive settlements as at Phoenix, and an ideology of resistance, 'Satyagraha'.

### **4.1 Consequential Outcomes of the Interface**

*Indian Opinion* mirrored the growth of Gandhi's thoughts and movement. It was largely contributive in stimulating and facilitating the intellectual evolution undergoing within him, which was immensely instrumental in evolving his conceptions that gave a firm ideological grounding to the resistance movement. As he revealed,

Week after week I poured out my soul in its columns, and expounded the principles and practice of Satyagraha as I understood it. During ten years, that is until 1914, excepting the intervals of my enforced rest in prison there was hardly an issue of *Indian Opinion* without an article from me. I cannot recall a word in these articles set down without thought or deliberation, or word of conscious exaggeration, or anything merely to please. Indeed the journal became for me training in self restraint and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

His journal was the organ of his political and social movement and discussed with intensity and concentration the problems that demanded immediate action. This initiative

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<sup>1</sup> M. K. Gandhi (1958), *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, p.210-211

encouraged people's participation. His own pen was responsible for more than three fourth of the content in his papers. And all his writings were related to the personal improvement and socio-political reform. The conception of *Hind Swaraj* (1909) was an important landmark in the evolution of Gandhi's socio-political thought in South Africa.

These intellectual churnings were responsible for the genesis of his memorable conceptions and intellectual tools which structured and organized the struggle. He primarily put forth a model of protest politics, the tradition of organized 'passive resistance'. The notions as *Satyagraha*, *Sarvodaya* were the important components of his politics and value system. His experiments to develop settlements, as the Phoenix and Tolstoy farm, based on communitarian values, working as constructive workhouses to implement his thoughts. The subordinated state of the colonies needed a viable course of protest and his mode of activism presented successful precedence to emulate.

#### ***4.1.1 Tradition of Organized 'Passive Resistance'***

Gandhi and his political career commenced and evolved through various stages in South Africa. In the nascent days of his politics, he was introduced with a baggage of his own convictions and ideals which largely directed and manoeuvred his political progression. The entrenched faith in the British values and institutions grounded his trust in protest through the constitutional means and 'moderation'. Thus, the political tools as press, petitions occupied a prominent position in his mode of oppositional politics. His beliefs and influences, like that of, Tolstoy, Thoreau never allowed him to deflect to more violent means. He was initially introduced to the 'rightness and value of Passive Resistance' primarily through the *New Testament*; the *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* gave it permanent form.<sup>2</sup> His gradually developed concepts as *Satyagraha* and passive resistance were inspired by these circumstantial strategies. But it does not imply that there was any deficit in the intensity of his means. Fatima Meer argues 'Satyagraha is not passive resistance, it is

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph J. Doke (2005), *A Portrait in South Africa*, New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry Of information and Broadcasting, Government of India p.100



profoundly active; it is the mustering of the ultimate human power, that of the soul against the evils of tyranny.’<sup>3</sup>

The *modus operandi* of his resistance was organized and collective effort. He formed an Association of Passive Resistance to mobilize the masses. There were chiefly three classes of South African Indians, namely, the traders, the ex-indentured Indians, who were placed as clerks, teachers and court interpreters, and a great body of indentured labourers. Gandhi began his work with the first two groups but soon encompassed the third and even the women in his campaign, making the struggle inclusive, for all sections of the community. Gandhi’s organized and passive resistance was based on the moral strength of the resisters and not on the violent power show which was the most viable approach when it involved mass participation and action. It introduced the subjugated societies to a more pragmatic model to follow.

#### ***4.1.2 ‘Satyagraha’ as the mode of Gandhian Protest***

Gandhi brought new dimensions to politics, developing his own politics with values and principles. Fatima Meer rightly discusses his comprehension of politics that he converted it from ‘the quest for power into quest for truth, justice for the downtrodden and the poor and a means of personal and societal liberation.’ She adds that his political process is incongruously a moral force, *Satyagraha*, discovered and perfected in South Africa, to win civil liberties.<sup>4</sup>

‘*Satyagraha*’ is a combination of two Sanskrit words, namely ‘*satya*’ meaning ‘truth’ and ‘*agraha*’ which means ‘hold on’ or ‘determination’ Therefore it means ‘hold on to truth.’ It was an indigenously devised and well experimented approach used by Gandhi. His prolific writings, facilitated primarily through his journalistic interventions, developed his thought process and philosophy that served as indispensable inspiration for the *Satyagraha* movement he waged. His note of defiance and sacrifice gave a new

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<sup>3</sup> Fatima Meer, “The Making of the Mahatma: The South African Experience” in B. R. Nanda (eds)(1995), *Mahatma Gandhi 125 Years*, New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations and New Age International Publishers Limited,p.49

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* ,p48

stimulus to the evolution of press as a weapon of *Satyagraha*. As Gandhi remarked on the concomitant relation between his press and politics,

‘Without Passive Resistance, there would have been no richly illustrated and important special issue of *Indian Opinion*, which has, for the last eleven years, in an unpretentious and humble manner, endeavoured to serve my countrymen and South Africa, a period covering the most critical stage that they will, perhaps, ever have to pass through. It marks the rise and growth of Passive Resistance, which has attracted world-wide attention.’<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.1.2.1 Concept and Its Evolution

South African experience perfected the principles of *Satyagraha* and prepared Gandhi for massive and relentless struggle. His technique got an overwhelming response and was named ‘*Sadagraha*’ and later ‘*Satyagraha*’ by Gandhi. The term ‘passive resistance’ was at first employed to describe the new principle of fighting political and social evils devoid of violence.

*Indian Opinion*, the voice of the movement, was largely instrumental in the maturation of his concept. It was the medium which facilitated the participation of the masses in its evolution. The journal announced the birth of the new concept and invited suggestions for an appropriate “equivalent of passive resistance”, published in the January 11, 1908 issue of the journal. The word ‘*Sadagraha*’, means firmness in good conduct, appealed to Gandhi, later he amended it to ‘*Satyagraha*’, firmness in truth. “Resistance” means determined opposition to anything, that was rendered as *agraha* (firmness, insistence). *Agraha* in a right cause is *sat* or ‘*satyagraha*’.<sup>6</sup> The new technique gradually evolved with time and experience.

The birth of Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* concept was marked with concurrent radical transformations in his ideas regarding the roles of law and coercion in promoting social change. After 1908 his reliance upon the physical force reduced with the strengthening of his faith in ‘soul force’. Michael W. Sonnleitner points that the disillusionment with the

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<sup>5</sup> “Golden Number”(The Theory and Practice of Passive Resistance), *IO* before 11-7-1914, *CWMG*, Vol. XII, p.460

<sup>6</sup> “Johannesburg Letter”, 47, *IO* 11-01-1908, *CWMG*, Vol. VII, p.80

British government after the royal assent was granted to the Black act in 1907, prompted him to consider more seriously the thought of writers like Salter and Thoreau. And through the renewed struggle the 'new concept representing Gandhi's nonviolent approach had been formed. But he argues that the granting of Royal Assent to the Black Act was not the only factor for his change, though seems to act as the 'prime encouragement' to the 'increasingly spiritual emphasis' in life. It was coming gradually to him as religious experimentation in his life had already started with the 'committed paths of voluntary poverty (1905)', 'celibacy (1906)', and the renunciation of such worldly protection as his life insurance policy (1906).<sup>7</sup> His influences were evident which contributed to the growth of his thought as both, William MacIntyre Salter's<sup>8</sup> *Ethical Religion* and Henry David Thoreau's<sup>9</sup> *An Essay on Civil Disobedience*, were adequately discussed by Gandhi in *Indian Opinion*. It was a concept which saw a major metamorphosis in his thought and philosophy.

Gandhi expounded the strength of the notion bringing forth the difference with passive resistance,

The use of this force requires the adoption of poverty, in the sense that we must be indifferent whether we have the wherewithal to feed or clothe ourselves. During the past struggle, all Passive Resisters, if any at all, were not prepared to go that length. Some again were only Passive Resisters so-called. They came without any conviction, often with mixed motives, less often with impure motives...Thus it was that the struggle became prolonged; for the exercise of the purest soul-force, in its perfect form, brings about instantaneous relief. For this exercise, prolonged training of the individual soul is an absolute necessity, so that a perfect Passive Resister has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. We cannot all suddenly become such men, but, if my proposition is correct—as I know it to be correct—the greater the spirit of Passive Resistance in us, the better men we will become.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Michael W. Sonleitner (2006), "The Birth of Gandhian *Satyagraha*: Nonviolent Resistance and Soul Force" in Richard L. Johnson (ed.) (2006), *Gandhi's Experiments With Truth, Essential Writing By and About Gandhi*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, p.171

<sup>8</sup>The reference of Salter in *Indian Opinion*, 19-1-1907, *CWMG*, Vol.VI,p.284-87 and also between 5-1-1907 and 23-1-1907

<sup>9</sup>Gandhi acknowledged Thoreau's influence for his thought manifested in the articles of the journal. "On The Duty of Civil Disobedience", *Indian Opinion*, 7-9-1907, *CWMG*, Vol. VII, pp.217-218

<sup>10</sup>"Golden Number", *CWMG* Vol. XII, p.461-462

The new theory explicated all aspects of Gandhi's life and the political side and was 'based upon the immutable maxim that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed.'<sup>11</sup>

#### **4.1.2.2 Principles of 'satya' and 'ahimsa'**

'*Satya*' or truth occupied an important position in the Gandhian politics. It was a crucial element in all aspects of his whole corpus of thought and beliefs. Truth in journalism was 'not only a question of knowledge. It meant more. It meant the balancing of judgment in a mood disinterested manner.' Further, '*ahimsa*' or non violence not only defined his approach to politics but it was his way of life. These two notions were the foundation of his socio-political edifice. South African politics was a laboratory in which Gandhi experimented with his valuable formula.

#### **4.1.3 The Notion of 'Sarvodaya'**

South African experience saw the crystallization of his thoughts and beliefs which laid the path for his future political career. His belief in soul force and renunciation was reinforced with the reading of *Bhagvad Gita* and *Upanishads*. The passage to the ethic of non-possession was evident in his return of the costly gifts presented to him on his departure to India, which he placed in trust for use by the community. These ideas were the gradual steps towards the growth of new notions.

##### **4.1.3.1 Genesis and Growth**

His deepening disillusionment and aversion to western capitalist notions began to surface. Acquaintance with Ruskin and Tolstoy confirmed his quest for an alternate society, alternate to the capitalist. He named that society as *Sarvodaya*. The notion was largely inspired by Ruskin's *Unto the Last*. His experiments in *Sarvodaya* began at Phoenix and Tolstoy, as a society based on social equality, though recognizing differential aptitudes and talents, but rewarding each equally; a society in which Truth is the goal and selfless

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<sup>11</sup> "Golden Number", *CWMG* Vol. XII, p.461

service the means; an intrinsically Indian form of socialism, self-contained and self-sufficient, based on *ahimsa* or non-violence.

Gandhi implemented the notion of *sarvodaya*, ‘advancement of all’ and introduced it to the Indian community through a series of articles in *Indian Opinion*. He acquainted them to John Ruskin and his ideas,

We become engrossed in the pursuit of self-interest. In the sequel, we find that going abroad does us more harm than good, or does not profit us as much as it ought to. All religion presuppose the moral law, but even if we disregard religion as such, its observance is necessary on grounds of common sense also. Our happiness consists in observing it. This is what John Ruskin has established... In order that Indians may profit by his ideas, we have decided to present extracts from his book.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.1.3.2 Conception of the Constructive Workhouses

The fruition of Gandhian protest politics in South Africa gave some long lasting traditions as the formation of constructive workhouses, which he later developed as his ‘*Ashrams*’. These workhouses developed into settlements productive for the resistance movement in evolving and housing the *tools* of the movement.

The first such settlement was envisaged after the inception of *Indian Opinion* and was unfolded in one of its editorial,

If a piece of ground sufficiently large and far away from the hustle of the town could be secured, for housing the plant and the machinery, each one of the workers could have his plot of land on which he could live...the profits could be divided amongst them at the end of each year...the workers could live a more simple and natural life, and the ideas of Ruskin and Tolstoy [be] combined with strict business principles<sup>13</sup>

The ‘scheme’ was conceived with a spirit of “educative influence” and put forth a ‘threefold incentives’ to all to participate to work for the ideal in the shape of *Indian Opinion*: “perfectly healthy surroundings to live in; and an immediate prospect of owning

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Sarvodaya,’ *Indian Opinion* 16-5-1908, *CWMG*, Vol. VIII(1962), pp. 239-241

<sup>13</sup> “Ourselves”, IO 24-12-1904, *CWMG*, Vol. IV(1960), p. 320

a piece of land on the most advantageous terms; and a direct tangible interest and participation in the scheme.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the Phoenix settlement, fourteen miles away from Durban town, came into being and *Indian Opinion* was transferred there from Durban. Tolstoy Farm was another landmark in his growth; it also made valuable contribution to the *Satyagraha*. In the farm everyone had to work, drawing the same living wage, and attending to the press job work in spare time. It soon became the breeding ground for the movement, emphasizing the socio-political reform and advancement of the community. Gandhi’s politics was multi-faceted, making it a learning process for himself and for his community,

‘Passive Resistance is the noblest and the best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters of children, but it should precede it...It should be an essential of real education that a child should learn that, in the struggle of life...It was because I felt the force of this truth, that, during the latter part of the struggle, I endeavoured, as much as I could, to train the children at Tolstoy Farm and then at Phoenix along these lines.’<sup>15</sup>

## 4.2 An Appraisal

The liaison between press and protest had a consequential impact on the movement and the Indian community. Indians developed as a homogenous entity conscious enough to get organized and mobilized to stand for their rights. The companionship between Gandhi and *Indian Opinion* lasted for eleven years. It more or less forced the South African provincial regimes to modify their repressive laws against Indians.

Gandhi’s immense concern for *Indian Opinion* was reflective in his attitude towards the paper even after he left South Africa. In his letter to Mr. A. H. West, dated October 31, 1915, he outpoured his apprehension, “All I know is this that you must continue *Indian*

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<sup>14</sup> “Ourselves”, IO 24-12-1904, *CWMG*, Vol. IV(1960),p.320

<sup>15</sup> “Golden Number”, *CWMG* Vol.XII p.462

*Opinion* even if you have to labour in the streets and if you burn your boats, so much the better.”<sup>16</sup>

#### **4.2.1 Role and Relationship of Press and Protest**

This selfless venture of Gandhi, the *Indian Opinion*, starting from its first issue till 1914 when he left, touched different aspects of exploitation and otherwise of Indians in South Africa. It proved to be a potent weapon in his fight against the racial and discriminatory policies of British Government, which were more based on economic than cultural reasons. As Nanda points, “Behind the specious pleas of cultural differences, of conflicting ways of living, has always been economic rivalry.”<sup>17</sup>

*Indian Opinion* extensively promoted interaction and participation among the Indians. Gandhi’s passive resistance got popular and got its name through a campaign in the journal. “Satyagraha would have been impossible without Indian Opinion. The readers looked forward to it for a trustworthy account of the Satyagraha campaign as also of the real conditions of Indians in South Africa.”<sup>18</sup>

##### **4.2.1.1 Vigilant Participant of Politics**

Gandhi’s press played the role of a vigilant participant in the political arena. It made people aware of the misleading reporting of other newspapers. Gandhi use to keep an observant eye on distorted interpretations of the facts, which could create confusion.

*Natal Mercury* in an article on the issue of £3 tax reported that it might be doubtful whether Indians would be allowed to remain in the Province. It contended that, when the £3 tax is removed, the privilege of remaining in the country would be taken away from Indians and the only alternative left for them would be either to re-indenture or return to India. It also pointed out that under the Immigrants Regulation Act the minister had

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<sup>16</sup> Letter to Mr. A. H. West, *CWMG* Vol.XIII, 31-10-1915, p.138

<sup>17</sup>B.R. Nanda (1958), *Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Reprint 2001.p. 62

<sup>18</sup>M. K. Gandhi (1958), *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahemdabad: Navjivan Publishing House, p.211

power to declare all Asiatics “prohibited immigrants” on economic grounds and thus to deport ex-indentured Indians. This deceptive and ambiguous comprehension of the measure was immediately inquired, on which Mr. E. M. Gorges clarified the issue and replied:

General Smuts desires me to say that it is perfectly clear from the report of the Commission that it was never intended that, by the repeal of the provisions of the existing laws dealing with the £3 licence, the position of the ex-indentured immigrant would be prejudicially affected in some other way; and had there been the slightest doubt on the subject, he is sure that the Commission—consisting as it did of three eminent lawyers—would certainly have drawn attention to it. The Minister himself is quite satisfied that the effect of the Bill as it now stands would not be to bring into evidence the position which the Mercury and African Chronicle would have us believe will be created.<sup>19</sup>

#### ***4.2.2 Impact and Significance***

The importance of the journal for Gandhi is evident from his own statement in his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*: ‘Indian Opinion... was a part of my life.’ The journal was indispensable for the advancement and furtherance of the movement and the community.

The paper was well received among Indians and Europeans. Its popularity is exhibited by its circulation, which reached its peak figure of 3,500 in a country where the total number of potential Indian readers did not exceed 20,000 and where copies were also circulated from door to door.<sup>20</sup> It made good headway as a journalistic tool in the Gandhian politics, which was acknowledged in the quarters of the other press. The *Cape Argus*’s leading article on *Indian Opinion* was published in the journal in its issue of January 5, 1907. It stated: “They (Natal Indians) have an able organ, *Indian Opinion*, printed in English and Gujarati, and it is from Natal that the champion of South African Indians’ interests mostly came.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Indian Opinion*, 1-7-1914, CWMG, Vol. XII, p. 178

<sup>20</sup> Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p.68

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in S.N. Bhattacharya (1965), *Mahatma Gandhi : The Journalist*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, p.21



*Indian Opinion* and Gandhian politics were also significant in laying the legacy for future. They put forth a tradition of protest journalism through organized and systematized resistance for subjugated communities.

#### **4.2.2.1 Tradition of Protest Journalism**

*Indian Opinion* was the crucial factor that laid the firm foundations of Gandhi's contributions to journalism. After his return to India in 1915 to take up the larger cause of Indian Independence, he admitted,

Indian Opinion played a very significant role throughout the course of the passive resistance campaign. At one level, it heightened the major issues, chronicled the activities of the resisters, and brought Indian grievances to the notice of influential people in Britain and India, at another level, it became an active agent in mobilizing and organizing resistance.<sup>22</sup>

The stream of correspondence on every subject that deluged the newspapers and government offices of Natal maintained a very high level of erudition. Gandhi was not hesitant to quote Max Muller, Schopenhauer, or Victor Hugo in support of the Indian position.

The strength and eloquence of the Gandhian press was well exhibited through his activism. This example is enough to express it which is with regards to the draft of the Transvaal's Asiatic Amendment Law Ordinance of 1906, calling for the re-registration of Asians. The proposal energized the Indians to send Gandhi to London to seek the withholding of royal assent, only to obtain a delay until the Transvaal secured responsible government in 1907, followed by the law's adoption. Reservations about the draft expressed by Winston Churchill, then Colonial Under-Secretary, and the Prime Minister, H. Campbell, Bannerman, and a protest by the Indian National Congress in India, were of no avail against the will of South African governments to use the devolution of power within the empire to determine their own racial policies without regard to any possible

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<sup>22</sup> Uma Shashikant Mesthrie, "From Advocacy to Mobilization: *Indian Opinion*, 1903-1914" in Les Switzer (ed.)(1997), *South Africa's Alternative Press: Voices of Protest and Resistance 1880-1960s*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.116

injury to imperial stability. The journal and the movement showed their strength in confronting and compelling such a force to accept their demands.

#### **4.2.2.2 Systematized Resistance**

Gandhi put forth a memorable tradition of resistance which was an indigenously devised and practiced form of protest politics and which proved to be a precedent for the ongoing struggles, especially the anti apartheid movement in South Africa.

It was the Transvaal's registration law that proved to be a crucial moment for Gandhi and the history of colonial resistance movements. For he turned from dependency on constitutional devices, supplemented by the writing of tracts that contained thrusts at injustice and modernity to such acts as picketing and eventually to non-violent disobedience of laws. September 1906 brought the first clear evidence of Gandhi's intention to disobey the law. Having voluntarily registered with the Transvaal authorities to show their willingness to be counted, the Indians faced a demand for re-registration. When the time for compliance arrived in November 1907, Gandhi was a prominent rule breaker. It was during this struggle that he first used the term *satyagraha* for non-violent resistance. His mode of political activism presented a model of systematized and organized mass based struggle employing his essentially fundamental political tools as press.

### Conclusion

History of the Press and through the Press is among the consequential components of historical construction in modern times. Press has been one of the significant segments undertaking the systematization of the societal structures. It facilitates various social and political processes that advance changes in society. Press in Gandhian oppositional politics in South Africa was a *potent socio-political tool* that was pivotal in determining his politics and reform vision for the Indian community. The functional worth of press as a tool of *protest* and *identity construction* is well exhibited, in conceiving a homogenous reality for South African Indians, and consolidating and mobilizing them to successfully stand for their rights. The emergent leadership of M. K. Gandhi and his political organ, *Indian Opinion* launched the struggle for assertion of their existence and identity.

Gandhi's venture into South African politics is marked as a fundamental transforming experience for himself, the Indian community and the South African political scenario. The era was formative not only for the Indians in South Africa but for Gandhi himself. It saw the evolution of Indians as a socially politically organized group, posing as a "*community for itself*"; and the crystallization of Gandhi's socio-political thought and philosophy.

His politics in South Africa represents a movement in itself, traversing through different stages of political activism. Commencing with a '*moderate*' stance, in a mild protest tone within the confines delineated by the British institutional setup, he moved to a '*mass mobiliser*' mode. His initial political intervention was inspired by his set of ideals and beliefs which underwent crucial remodelling with experiential structuring of his thought

and politics. His second sojourn to South Africa marks the commencement of the story of his transformation and acquisition of new role with new values. Gandhi's corpus of ideas and thoughts was not the eruption of the moment but evolved with circumstances and time as Nanda argues, "Gandhi was no theorist; his principles evolved in response of his own needs, and the environment in which he found himself."<sup>1</sup> The impact of the influences and the context is important. This intellectual and thoughtful fermentation was crystallized and reached its culmination with the conception of *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. His newly conceptualized ideological orientation studded with his conceived ideals as *Satyagraha*, *Savodaya*, showed the direction of his future politics.

Gandhi was largely contributive for developing South African Indians as a socio-political conscious and organized entity by developing a participative sphere or forum among the Indians. His efforts gave an organizational expression to the community with the formation of the Natal Indian Congress in 1894. The journalistic organ, *Indian Opinion*, was primarily responsible to evolve, to use Jurgen Habermas's concept, the 'public sphere' in the community. *Indian Opinion* was advanced as a communicative realm where Gandhi raised and put forth the common issues and questions and urged the Indians to have discursive sessions for devising consensual politics and course of action.

Press was one of the most crucial tools employed by Gandhi for identity construction among South African Indians. He devised different strategies which were successfully implemented through the efficacy and potency press. Gandhi's political activism was a transforming experience for the Indian community in South Africa. The *heterogeneous* community underwent a homogenizing process conceptualizing and consolidating the Indian identity. The procedure instilled a sense of *Indianness* in them. He through his press in the Andersanian mode conceptualized and disseminated the *Indianness* among Indians to forge them under a united banner. He gave vernacular newspapers a position in taking news and views to all sections and corners of the community. But his politics moved beyond Benedict Anderson's comprehension of nationalism through single

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<sup>1</sup> B. R. Nanda (1958), *Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Reprint 2001. p.9

vernacular press, as Gandhi employed different vernaculars in his journal to represent and recognize different regional and linguistic groups with their specificities, spreading a common message.

Gandhi with his profound pen is not a well discussed aspect of this multi faceted personality. The proficient capacity of his journalistic flair is reasonably reflective through his writings. S. N. Bhattacharya who had fairly explored the journalist Gandhi remarks on his mode of writing, “Not only in the style which from the Johnsonian or Macaulayan verbosity gave place to the Gandhian simplicity but in the content as well, Gandhiji revolutionized the thinking of his contemporaries.”<sup>2</sup>

Journalism is the artist’s expertise in producing news which is not confined to disseminating information but exhibition of his ability to put forth the right one, and here comes his role in comprehending the context, purpose and implication. It is a momentous responsibility on him to ‘preserve, pursue and foster’ the society. Gandhi’s journalism was a means to an end. He regarded it as a medium of social and political changes. Gandhian idea of newspaper in a movement was largely educative, that people could understand the importance of independence, social, economic and political. It was a part of his strategy to utilize every move in the campaign for an overall advancement of the community. He looked upon journalism as a means to serve the people and not a commercial enterprise. He expressed in his autobiography:

The sole aim of journalism should be service. The newspaper is a great power, but just as an unchained torrent of water submerges whole countryside and devastates crops, even so an uncontrolled pen serves but to destroy. If the control is from without, it proves more poisonous than want of control. It can be profitable only when exercised from within.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> S. N. Bhattacharya (1965), *Mahatma Gandhi : The Journalist* , Asia Publishing House, Bombay p.165

<sup>3</sup>M. K. Gandhi(1958), *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Ahemdabad: Navjivan Publishing House.p. 211

It has often been argued that Gandhi's South African politics was not conclusive and did not provide 'enduring solution' to the Indian question. But his activism intended and meant much more. It would be gross underestimation of his movement to confine and measure it through its political achievements. It was a multi-dimensional campaign, stretching beyond the political realm encompassing the socio-political, cultural and moral aspects aiming for the over all advancement of the community, which would have been difficult to conceive without the spearheading role of his press.

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