

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

MASTERS IN ARTS-PHILOSOPHY

SEMESTER -II

PHILOSOPHY OF M.K GANDHI

ELECTIVE-204

BLOCK-1

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.



PHILOSOPHY OF M.K.GANDHI

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UNIT 13 Changing Perspectives On Ecology And Development

Unit 14 Nonviolent Ownership: Trusteeship

BLOCK-1 PHILOSOPHY OF M.K.GANDHI

Introduction to the block

In this block you will be introduced to study the historical and philosophical life of Gandhi. You will his notions of satya, Ahimsa, Nationalism, democracy and Swaraj

Unit one deals with life and influences of Gandhi.

Unit two deals with the philosophy on Gandhi.

Unit three Learn about Gandhi's views on Satya and know God as Truth and Truth as God

Unit four talks about Gandhi's idea of Nationalism means self-rule in which the whole community is involved and not just the elite. Gandhi insisted on moral progress and the elimination of slave mentality.

Unit Five deals with Gandhi's ideal of stateless order as Ramrajya, which to him is not synonymous to Hindu Raj but refers to a divine State wherein external controls over individual's inner conscience are removed to their fullest possible extent.

Unit Six talks about, Non-violence as a dynamic process involving continuous and persistent, deliberations, efforts, strains and actions. It is true that non-violence requires extreme patience on the part of one who is using this method, but this patience is not a sign of inactivity, it is an expression of a conscious and inner effort to force the so called opponent to see and realize his own mistake.

Unit Seven talks about Swaraj .It makes clear that real Swaraj means that every individual should have a feeling of freedom.

UNIT 1 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

STRUCTURE

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Influences That Shaped His Thought

1.2.1 Early Life Of Gandhi

1.2.2 Early Education In Schools And Outside

1.2.3. Tasting Forbidden Fruit/My Experiments With Meat

1.2.4 Study In England

1.3 As A Lawyer, Social, And Political Worker In Africa

1.4 As The Social And Political Leader Of India

1.5 Let Us Sum Up

1.6 Keywords

1.7 Questions For Review

1.8 Suggested Readings

1.9 Answer To Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Learn about the biography of M. K Gandhi
- know the key events in his life
- understand the basis of his progress

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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Mahatma Gandhi was born at Porbandar on the 2nd of October 1869. His ancestors were Vaisya by caste and profession, but his father, uncle and grandfather were service-holders. His father was, for some time, prime minister in the court of Rajkot and also in Vankaner. Although his parents were orthodox Vaisnavas, they were enlightened enough to make all necessary arrangements for giving modern education to their children. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi grew in a mixed but balanced set-up. He was initiated into religious and moral traditions, and yet his mind was sufficiently open to the changing needs of the time.

His early educational career was uneventful except for his association with one of his friends who tempted him to evil like meat-eating, smoking etc. These experiences had a good effect as they aroused in Gandhi the ever-present moral sense. In 1888, he was sent to England for legal studies. His father was dead by then, and he could receive his mother's permission for going abroad only after taking a vow in the presence of his mother not to touch meat and not to keep bad company. In fact, later on this vow became for him a symbol of resolute will and came to convince him that sincere determination for doing anything good was bound to succeed. In England, besides his legal studies, he also came to acquaint himself with the great and good things of the West. He returned to India in 1891 after qualifying as a barrister-at-law. After staying in India for a very brief period he went to South Africa to work in the case of an Indian merchant there. His stay in South Africa and his bitter experiences of various acts of racial discrimination committed by the white, people of that place changed the entire course of his life and action. There, for the first time, he started his moral experiments of trying to conquer evil by love. He started passive resistance by openly defying immoral laws and thus started putting to practice his moral and religious ideas.

With his unique experience of South African moral and political adventures, he came to India, determined to make efforts for the independence of India by applying the technique of Satyagraha. He also had taken a decision to work for the social reform of India · by trying to remove

such social evil as untouchability, social disparity etc. He was also convinced that his methods of non-violent Satyagraha, which had succeeded in solving smaller problems of life, could also be effectively used for solving greater problems like, 'political slavery'. The life of Gandhi from 1920 to 1948, when Gandhi attained his martyrdom, has become almost a household story.

1.2 INFLUENCES THAT SHAPED HIS THOUGHT

It is true that Gandhi's thought has originality and a freshness about it, but it carries on it the stamp of a number of influences. One of the earliest influences that provided to Gandhi's thought its backbone was that of ancient Hindu tradition. He had grown up in a family and in a tradition that had always respected orthodox Hindu ways- of religion and worship. At a very early age he had studied the Gita and the Ramayana, and also the Vaisnava and the Jaina literatures. These studies sharpened his moral sense and kindled his religious insight.

While in England he got an opportunity of being acquainted with some of the intellectuals of the time and also with Christianity. It is said that when he saw the statue of Christ at St. Peter's in Rome, he burst into tears. He had a tremendous respect for the life and personality of Jesus, and thus was able to incorporate in his thought some of the original sayings of Jesus Christ. For that he was, in some respects, indebted to Tolstoy, who in his *The Kingdom of God is within you*, gave almost a new interpretation to Christianity. Tolstoy left his mark on the mind of Gandhi in various ways, specially his emphasis on the power and dignity of suffering gave to Gandhi an inspiration for developing his own notion of Satyagraha. Likewise, the great American thinker Thoreau also influenced Gandhi a great deal. His idea of civil disobedience revealed to Gandhi the possibility of using nonviolence as a technique for solving even the major problems of social and political life. Besides these he had also a first-hand knowledge of Zoroastrianism and Islam and also of the works of Ruskin and those of some

of the theosophists of the time. All these influences were taken and deliberated upon. Gandhi carried on experiments after experiments on moral, religious and existential issues both in his inner life and in outward existence; and his thought is nothing but a product of the series of experiments that he carried upon.

1.2.1 Early Life Of Gandhi

In 1869 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in this land of complex traditions, in the small north-western peninsula called Kathiawad, which forms one of the outlying parts of the Gujarati-speaking area of the province of Bombay. His forebears belonged to the Vaishya (trading) class—the third of the four castes of Hinduism. But his father and grandfather preferred service as ministers in the native states of that province. They were both reputed as much for honest and loyal service as for their uncompromising sense of honor. His family followed the traditional theistic faith, called Vaishnavism, which inculcates the worship of God as the Supreme Person endowed with all auspicious qualities, and which rejects the belief in God as the Indeterminate Absolute transcending all assignable attributes. Devotion and self-surrender are the keynotes of this faith. Offering worship in the temples, taking sacred vows, and observing fasts on different holy days round the year, are the usual practices of the devout Vaishnavas. Gandhi was born and raised in such an atmosphere. His mother and his nurse were particularly devout, and Gandhi imbibed their faith and learned the many current sacred names of God, particularly Rama, which he was taught to recite whenever in difficulty. But the locality had members of other faiths as well, such as the Jainas, Muslims, and Zoroastrians. Gandhi's father had friends among them, and when they visited, there were friendly discussions about those other faiths. Gandhi listened to them. He also read, as the Autobiography tells us, religious books in Gujarati from his father's library, such as the Ramayana (the life and story of Rama, the ideal and truthful Hindu King, adored also as an incarnation of God), the Bhagavata (a semi-historical and semi-allegorical devotional treatise which has been the

chief source of inspiration to all theists in ancient and modern India), the Manusmriti (the ethical, social, and political laws of Manu, the law giver of ancient India). He thus had, as he says, some glimpses of religion even in early life. But in spite of an abundance of Christian literature, missionaries, and churches in India, Christianity failed to attract young Gandhi, as most other Hindu boys, whose feelings would be voiced by the following interesting explanation given by Gandhi in his Auto-biography: "Only Christianity was at the time an exception. I developed a sort of dislike for it. And for a reason in those days Christian missionaries used. to stand in a corner near the high school and hold forth pouring abuses on Hindus and their gods." As a boy, Gandhi was rather frail, nervous, and shy. He was none too brilliant in his studies. He mentions having read Gujarati, English, a little Sanskrit, of which he never felt very confident, and mathematics for his matriculation from the University of Bombay. But he was honest and laborious; and that helped him through the high school.

He learned from his mother and neighbors the Indian maxim, "There is nothing higher than Truth." He also learned that harmlessness or nonviolence was the highest virtue (ahimsa paramo dharmah). Though this latter is universally acknowledged among the Hindus in all parts of India, it is most rigidly Practiced by the Vaishnavas and particularly the Jainas, the combined influence of which turned the native place of Gandhi, Gujarat, into the land of strictest vegetarianism. Gandhi grew in that atmosphere.

But the impact of Western ideas, which began to pour into India through the High Schools, Colleges, and Universities established by the British Government, had already begun to shake the age long ideas and customs followed by Indians. The newly educated Indian minds began to rebel and break down, if not openly, at least secretly, some of these customs which, they thought, were the causes of their physical weakness and political slavery. Young Gandhi came for a time under the influence of some older students who secretly visited places where they could eat meat and smoke cigarettes tabooed at home. He even stole a few coppers and once some gold to meet such forbidden expenses. But soon he was seized by remorse and

made a clean breast of his lapses to his father, gathering the moral courage to receive any punishment his father might inflict. But to his utter surprise his father forgave him with silent tears which completely washed away Gandhi's secret leanings. This was for him the first double lesson on the powers of truthfulness and love (ahimsa)-how truthfulness can arouse love, and love can silently, but most effectively, reform the heart. This sowed the seed of the twin principles of Truth and Love which grew larger and wider every day throughout his life.

As Gandhi says in the Autobiography: "This was for me an object lesson in Ahimsa. When such Ahimsa, becomes all-embracing, it transforms everything it touches. There is no limit to its power."

1.2.2 Early Education In Schools And Outside

Gandhi's initiated education was at a school in Porbandar, where he encountered more difficulty in mastering the multiplication table than in learning naughty names for the teacher. Gandhi was about seven when his father left Porbandar for Rajkot to become a member of the Rajasthanik Court. At Rajkot, he was put into a primary school. From this school, he went to a suburban school and then to High School. During this period, Gandhi does not remember ever having told a lie, either to his teachers or to his school-mates. Being a shy child, he took as his books and his lessons as his sole companions. He inculcated the habit of being at school at the stroke of the hour, and to run back home as soon as school closed.

In his first year at the Alfred High School in Rajkot, when Mohandas was twelve, a British educational inspector named Mr. Giles came to examine the pupils. They were asked to spell five English words. Gandhi mis-spelt 'kettle'. The regular teacher saw the mistake and motioned Mohandas to copy from his neighbour's slate. Mohandas refused.

Recounting this incident in his Autobiography, Gandhi states:

I would not be prompted. It was beyond me to see that he wanted me to copy the spelling from my neighbour's slate, for I had thought that the teacher

was there to supervise us against copying. The result was that all the boys, except myself, were found to have spelt every word correctly. Only I had been stupid. The teacher tried later to bring this stupidity home to me, but without effect. I could never learn the art of ‘copying’.

Yet the incident did not in the least diminish my respect for my teacher. I was, by nature, blind to the faults of elders. Later I came to know of many other failings of this teacher, but my regard for him remained the same. For I had learnt to carry out the orders of elders, not to scan their actions.

Two other incidents of the same period are worth remembering.

One day, he came across a book purchased by his father, Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka, a play about Shravana’s devotion to his parents., which Mohandas read with intense interest. He also saw a picture of Shravana carrying, by means of slings fitted to his shoulders, his blind parents on a pilgrimage. These left an indelible impression on his mind.

“Here is an example for you to copy,” Gandhi told himself.

Another play, ‘Harishchandra’, captured his heart. He was never tired of seeing it. “Why should all not be truthful like Harishchandra?” was the question Mohandas asked himself constantly. “To follow Truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me!” writes Gandhi in his Autobiography.

“I was not regarded as a dunce at the High School!” writes Gandhi. He always enjoyed the affection of his teachers. Certificates of progress and character used to be sent to his parents every year, and he does not recollect ever getting a bad certificate.

In fact, in the fifth and sixth standard, he even obtained scholarships of Rs. Four and Ten respectively, although he chooses to thank Good Luck more than his merit for the achievement. In his words, “I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least blemish drew tears to my eyes...”Gandhi recollects once receiving corporal punishment. He did not mind the punishment so much as the fact that he was accused of being untruthful. The incident is worthy of being recounted in Gandhi’s own words:

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When I was in the seventh standard, Dorabji Edulji Gimi was the headmaster. He was popular among boys as he was a disciplinarian, a man of method and a good teacher. He had made gymnastics and cricket compulsory for boys of the upper standards. I disliked both. I never took part in any exercise, cricket or football, before they were made compulsory. My shyness was one of the reasons for this aloofness, which I now see was wrong. I then had the false notion that gymnastics had nothing to do with education. Today I know that physical training should have as much place in the curriculum as mental training. I may mention, however, that I was none the worse for abstaining from exercise. That was because I had read in books about the benefits of long walks, which has still remained with me. These walks gave me a fairly hardy constitution. The reason of my dislike for gymnastics was my keen desire to serve as nurse to my father. As soon as the school closed, I would hurry home and begin serving him. Compulsory exercise came directly in the way of this service. I requested Mr. Gimi to exempt me from gymnastics so that I might be free to serve my father. But he would not listen to me. Now it so happened that one Saturday, when we had school in the morning, I had to go from home to the school for gymnastics at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I had no watch, and the clouds deceived me. Before I reached the school, the boys had all left. The next day, Mr. Gimi, examining the roll, found me marked absent. Being asked the reason for absence, I told him what had happened. He refused to believe me and ordered me to pay a fine of one or two annas. I was convicted of lying! That deeply pained me. How was I to prove my innocence? There was no way. I cried in deep anguish. I saw that a man of truth must also be a man of care. This was the first and last instance of my carelessness in school. I have a faint recollection that I finally succeeded in getting the fine remitted. The exemption from exercise was of course obtained, as my father wrote himself to the headmaster saying that he wanted me at home after school. But though I was none the worse for having neglected exercise, I am still paying the penalty of neglect. I do not know whence I got the notion that good handwriting was not a necessary part of education, but I retained it until I

went to England. When later, especially in South Africa, I saw the beautiful handwriting of lawyers and young men born and educated in South Africa, I was ashamed of myself and repented of my neglect. I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education. I tried later to improve mine, but it was too late. I could never repair the neglect of my youth. Let every young man and woman be warned by my example, and understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education. I am now of the opinion that children should first be taught the art of drawing before learning how to write. Let the child learn his letters by observation as he does different objects, such as flowers, birds, etc., and let him learn handwriting only after he has learnt to draw objects. He will then write a beautifully formed hand. Two more reminiscences of my school days are worth recording. I had lost one year because of my marriage, and the teacher wanted me to make good the loss by skipping a class – a privilege usually allowed to industrious boys. I therefore had only six months in the third standard and was promoted to the fourth after the examinations which are followed by the summer vacation. English became the medium of instruction in most subjects from the fourth standard. I found myself completely at sea. Geometry was a new subject in which I was not particularly strong, and the English medium made it still more difficult for me. The teacher taught the subject very well, but I could not follow him. Often I would lose heart and think of going back to the third standard, feeling that the packing of two years' studies into a single year was too ambitious. But this would discredit not only me, but also the teacher; because counting on my industry, he had recommended my promotion. So the fear of the double discredit kept me at my post. When, however, with much effort, I reached the thirteenth proposition of Euclid, the utter simplicity of the subject was suddenly revealed to me. A subject which only required a pure and simple use of one's reasoning powers could not be difficult. Ever since that time, geometry has been both easy and interesting for me. Sanskrit, however, proved a harder task. In geometry, there was nothing to memorize whereas in Sanskrit, I thought everything had to be

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learnt by heart. This subject also was commenced from the fourth standard. As soon as I entered the sixth, I became disheartened. The teacher was a hard taskmaster, anxious, as I thought, to force the boys. There was a sort of rivalry going on between the Sanskrit and the Persian teachers. The Persian teacher was lenient. The boys used to talk among themselves that Persian was very easy and the Persian teacher very good and considerate to the students. The 'easiness' tempted me and one day I sat in the Persian class. The Sanskrit teacher was grieved. He called me to his side and said: "How can you forget that you are the son of a Vaishnava father? Won't you learn the language of your own religion? If you have any difficulty, why not come to me? I want to teach you students Sanskrit to the best of my ability. As you proceed further, you will find in it things of absorbing interest. You should not lose heart. Come and sit again in the Sanskrit class." This kindness put me to shame. I could not disregard my teacher's affection. Today I cannot but think with gratitude of Krishnashankar Pandya. For if I had not acquired the little Sanskrit that I learnt then, I should have found it difficult to take any interest in our sacred books. In fact, I deeply regret that I was not able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the language, because I have since realized that every Hindu boy and girl should possess sound Sanskrit learning. It is now my opinion that in all Indian curricula of higher education, there should be a place for Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and English, besides of course, the vernacular. This big list need not frighten anyone. If our education were more systematic, and the boys free from the burden of having to learn their subjects through a foreign medium, I am sure learning all these languages would not be an irksome task but a perfect pleasure. A scientific knowledge of one language makes a knowledge of other languages comparatively easy. The above mentioned incidents greatly depict the gradual but a firm evolution of Gandhi's thoughts and ideas.

1.2.3. Tasting Forbidden Fruit/My Experiments With Meat

Gandhi's physique was frail compared with his older brother's, and especially compared with a Moslem friend named Sheik Mehtab, who could run great distances with remarkable speed and spectacular in the long and high jump. These exploits dazzled Gandhi. Gandhi regarded himself as a coward. "I used to be haunted," he asserts, "by the fear of thieves, ghosts and serpents. I did not dare to stir out of doors at night." He could not sleep without a light in his room; his wife had more courage than he and did not fear serpents or ghosts or darkness. "I felt ashamed of myself." Sheik Mehtab played on this sentiment. He boasted that he could hold live snakes in his hand, feared no burglars and did not believe in ghosts. Whence all this prowess and bravery? He ate meat. Gandhi ate no meat; it was forbidden by his religion. The boys at school used to recite a poem which went: Behold the mighty Englishman, He rules the Indian small, Because being a meat-eater He is five cubits tall. 'If all Indians ate meat, they could expel the British and make India free. Besides, argued Sheik Mehtab, boys who ate meat did not get boils; many of their teachers and some of the most prominent citizens of Rajkot ate meat secretly, and drank wine, too.' Sheik Mehtab propagandised Mohandas and finally the latter yielded. Sheik Mehtab brought cooked goat's meat and bread. Gandhi rarely touched baker's bread, and he had never even seen meat. The family was strictly vegetarian and so, in fact, were almost all the inhabitants of the Gujarat district in Kathiawar. In the resolve to make himself an effective liberator of his country, Gandhi bit into the meat but became sick immediately. In spite of a nightmare, he decided to continue the experiment. It continued for a whole year. The sin of consuming and liking meat was made greater by the sin of lying. In the end he could not stand the dishonesty and, though still convinced that meat-eating was 'essential' for patriotic reasons, he vowed to abjure it until his parents' death enabled him to be a carnivore openly. By now Gandhi developed an urge to reform Sheik Mehtab but the naïve and younger Gandhi was no match for his shrewd friend who offered revolt and

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adventure. Sheik even once led Gandhi to the entrance of a brothel. The institution had been told and paid in advance. Gandhi went in. "I was almost struck blind and dumb in this den of vice. I sat near the woman on her bed, but I was tongue-tied. She naturally lost patience with me and showed me the door, with abuses and insults." Providence, he explains, interceded and saved him despite himself. Mohandas also pilfered a bit of gold from his older brother. This produced a moral crisis. He had gnawing pangs of conscience and resolved never to steal again. Confessing his mistake to his father, he made a full, written statement of the crime, asked for due penalty, promised never to steal again and, with emphasis, begged his father not to punish himself for his son's dereliction. Karamchand was moved to tears after his son's confession but tore up the paper and lay down in silence. A remorseful Mohandas sat near him and wept, never forgot that silent scene. Sincere repentance and confession induced by love, rather than fear, won him his father's "sublime forgiveness" and affection. Lest he give pain to his father, and especially his mother, Mohandas did not tell them that he absented himself from temples. He did not like the 'glitter and pomp' of the temples. Religion to him meant irksome restrictions like vegetarianism which intensified his youthful protest against society and authority. And he had no 'living faith in God'. Who made the world; who directed it, he asked? Elders could not answer, and the sacred books were so unsatisfactory on such matters that he inclined 'somewhat towards atheism'. He even began to believe that it was quite moral, indeed a duty, to kill serpents and bugs. When Karamchand died in 1885, Putlibai took advice on family matters from a Jain monk named Becharji Swami, who helped Gandhi to go to England. After graduating from high school, Gandhi enrolled in Samaldas College, in Bhavnagar, and found the studies difficult and the atmosphere distasteful. As a friend of the family suggested, if Mohandas was to succeed his father as Prime Minister, he had better become a lawyer and the quickest way was to take a three-year course in England. Gandhi was most eager to go. But he was afraid of law; could he pass the examinations? Gandhi was interested in medicine but was objected to it by his brothers. Mother Putlibai

disliked parting with her last-born and was worried about the finances apart from relative's reproach. Having set his heart on England, Mohandas sought permission from his uncle. The latter discouraged him because European-trained lawyers forsook Indian traditions, took to cigars, ate everything and dressed "as shamelessly as Englishmen". But he would not object if Putlibai agreed. Gandhi tried to get a scholarship from the Porbandar government but the British administrator of the state rebuffed him curtly without even letting him present his case. Mohandas even wanted to pawn his wife's jewels as they were valued at high cost. Finally, his brother promised to supply the funds, but his mother was apprehensive about the young men's morals in England. Here, Becharji Swami, the Jain monk, came to his rescue and administered an oath to Mohandas who then solemnly took three vows: not to touch wine, women and meat. This earned his mother's consent. In June 1888, Gandhi left for Bombay with his brother but that did not end his tribulations. He was discouraged on the grounds of hostile weather. Meanwhile, the Modh Baniyas of Bombay heard about the projected trip, and summoned Mohandas to explain as their religion forbade overseas voyages because Hinduism could not be Practiced there. The resolve to go ahead resulted in Mohandas getting ostracised. Undaunted, he set sail to Southampton on 4 September 1888. The voyage to England gave Gandhi 'a long and healthy separation' from his wife and his new born child, Harilal.

1.2.4 Study In England

Gandhi had himself photographed shortly after he arrived in London in 1888. Despite the impressive features, the eyes seem to mirror puzzlement, fright, yearning; they seem to be moving and looking for something. The face is that of a person who fears coming struggles with himself and the world. Will he conquer his passions, he wonders; can he make good? In England, this shy young man found himself at sea. He often yearned for home and the tender affection of his mother. The vow never to touch meat left him half-starved and caused his friends much embarrassment, owing to a false sense of social decorum, born of inferiority complex from which most

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of the Indians suffered in those days. But Gandhi would not yield to the pressure of his well-meaning friends. For him “a vow was a vow and could not be broken”. He found a vegetarian eating house in Farringdon Street, near Fleet Street, not far from the Inner Temple where he studied law. He invested a shilling in Henry Salt’s *A Plea for Vegetarianism* which was being sold at the entrance. Inside, he ate his first hearty meal in England. This further strengthened his resolve. He was no more a vegetarian because of the vow but because of free choice. About this, he says: I had all along abstained from meat in the interest of truth and of the vow I had taken, but had wished at the same time, that every Indian should be a meat eater and had looked forward to being one myself freely and openly some day, and to enlisting others in the cause. The choice was now made in favour of vegetarianism, the spread of which henceforward became my mission. The literature on vegetarianism that he made it a point to read initiated him in the science of dietetics, and experiments therein occupied an important place in his life. Also, it brought him in contact with some notable persons of the time. With a youthful zeal, he became the Secretary of a Vegetarian Club. Though eager to speak, he always felt tongue-tied, and was at a loss to know how to express himself. His incapacity to express himself freely lasted throughout his stay in England. He says: My constitutional shyness has been no disadvantage whatever. In fact I can see that, on the contrary, it has been all to my advantage. My hesitancy in speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. Having disappointed his friends in the matter of food, he tried to satisfy them by making of himself an English gentleman. He took lessons in dancing and playing on the violin. He succeeded better with his dress. But he continued to live a simple life. He had limited funds and these he used with the utmost economy, keeping account of every penny he spent. He writes: “This habit of economy and strict accounting has stayed with me ever since, and I know that as a result, though I have had to handle public funds amounting to lakhs, I have succeeded in exercising strict economy in their disbursement, and instead of outstanding debts have had invariably a

balance in respect of all movements I have led.” This plain and simple living did not make his life dreary. On the contrary, his simple living, he says, “harmonized my inward and outward life; my life was certainly more truthful and my soul knew no bounds of joy”. Gandhi had, during his stay in London, moved chiefly among vegetarians, reformers and clergymen. The last-mentioned were anxious to mould and save his soul in their particular way, which, however, made no impression on him. But his contact with clergymen made him think deeply about religion and introduced him to his own. He studied the Gita in Arnold’s translation and greatly liked it. He also read Arnold’s *The Light of Asia*. He read the Bible. The Old Testament did not impress him. But the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, with its absolute and unconditional Non-Violence appealed to him, as its teachings conformed with the Vaishnavite ideas and practices in which he had been brought up at home. He thought that in spite of the war setting of the Gita, its fundamental morality was not different from that of the New Testament. In spite of his three years’ stay in England, Gandhi remained as diffident and shy as ever, “sitting tongue-tied, and never speaking, except when spoken to”. His efforts at public speaking were a dismal failure. At a farewell party given to friends, all that he could say with difficulty was, “Thank you, gentlemen, for having kindly responded to my Invitation.” He knew no law that would be useful to him in his practice in the Indian courts. But he had remained true to the three vows he had taken at the instance of his mother before leaving for England. The purpose for which Gandhi came to England receives only a few lines in his reminiscences, far fewer than his dietetic adventures. He was admitted as a student at the Inner Temple on 6 November, 1888, and matriculated at London University, in June 1890. He learned French and Latin, Physics, and Common and Roman Law. He read Roman Law in Latin. He improved his English and had no difficulty in passing the final examinations. Called to the Bar on 10 June, 1891, he enrolled in the High Court on 11 June, and sailed for India on 12 June, 1891. He had no wish to spend a single extra day in England, after spending two years and eight months there.

1. Check your Progress

1. Write a note on Gandhi's early life

**1.3 AS A LAWYER, SOCIAL, AND
POLITICAL WORKER IN AFRICA**

The later life of Gandhi in India, South Africa, and finally again in India may be regarded as the practical application of his earlier convictions in different fields and their extension in all directions of life.

After a short legal practice in India, without much success, he went to South Africa to prepare and conduct the case of an Indian Mohammedan merchant there. He toiled for months to collect all relevant facts, study law, and even bookkeeping, and by sheer devotion to truth he gained more knowledge about the case than even the two fighting businessmen themselves had, and he became master of the situation. He persuaded the parties to compromise the case and live in peace rather than ruin themselves by litigation. During the subsequent years about twenty-he always followed the same principles in practice and, while his reputation and income as an honest lawyer increased, he espoused the cause of truth and righteousness and often made legal fights end in love. He saved both his soul and those of the litigants, and won the esteem of all.

In South Africa he came into closer contact with many good Christians, Quakers and others, and read more of Christianity. He was influenced also by some good Muslims and studied Islam. The theosophists, too, attracted him and helped him study more of Hinduism-works on the Gita, Vedanta, Yoga, Jainism, and the books of Swami Vivekananda (the disciple of Saint Ramakrishna) who preached very persuasively the ideas of Vedanta to the West and won high applause in America, Europe, and India. Raichand Bhai, a saintly Indian merchant, made a deep impression on him

by his ideal Hindu life. He also studied the new interpretation of Christianity by Tolstoy and Ruskin, and its application by them in individual and social life. Referring to these influences in his Autobiography he says:

“Three moderns have left a deep impress on my life and captivated me: Raichand Bhai by his living contact; Tolstoy by his book, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*; and Ruskin by his *Unto This Last*.”

It should be noted that Tolstoy's spiritual interpretation of Christianity, the presence of God within, brought Christianity near to the Vedantic idea of man; his emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount and the conquering of hatred by love and evil by non-resistance seemed to Gandhi to be in exact conformity with Buddhist and Jaina teachings about Ahimsa put into social practice. Tolstoy's book contained long letters and accounts of the practical application of the principle of non-resistance by Quakers and others in America who strengthened Tolstoy's convictions. Gandhi was thus influenced by those American Christians, too, indirectly through Tolstoy. But Gandhi was more directly influenced by the American moral reformer and writer Henry David Thoreau whose essay on "Civil Disobedience" he read with great admiration. It is interesting to note that Thoreau, a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, was himself influenced a good deal, like the latter, by the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads.

From Ruskin's book Gandhi learned the dignity of manual labor, the idea that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all and that each can and should serve society by his own labor and profession in the field of his choice. But all these lessons went side by side with a life of earnest practice into which by circumstances and inner leanings Gandhi came to be drawn. South Africa abounded in color prejudices, and even Gandhi, in spite of his British education, European dress and professional standing, was often subjected to all kinds of humiliation against which he revolted and protested only to provoke more insult and sometimes physical assault. Discriminative legislation also was proposed by the British rulers to debar Indians from rights of citizenship and other privileges. These circumstances offered to Gandhi the opportunities for applying the principles of conquering evil by

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love. He adopted passive or civil resistance by disobeying immoral laws, courting assault, imprisonment, and all kinds of suffering without retaliation or mental hatred and anger. He hoped that even the hard-hearted rulers would ultimately be moved to pity and would realize their mistakes and rectify the wrongs. Gandhi was particularly hopeful about his method, for he had then the deep-rooted belief in the inner goodness of the British people which he thought could be aroused by moral appeal by showing in an effective manner the genuineness of the grievances and the righteousness of the cause. And this method of nonviolent fight ultimately succeeded.

But behind this success lay his long personal preparation and training of the fellow-workers by his own life of sacrifice and firmness in the cause of truth and righteousness. He found that if he were to serve the society wholeheartedly and train workers, he must give up his greed for money, hankering for pleasures and lead a life of utter simplicity and self-control and teach others by his own example the possibility of such a life. This led him to all kinds of disciplines and experiments. He founded a rural farm and attracted similarly-minded persons of different nationalities, white and non-white, to form a joint community based on the principle of plain living and high thinking. It was a big international family with a common kitchen, common ownership and run by the labor of each according to his or her capacity. In these long experiments in South Africa Gandhi worked in all conceivable and inconceivable capacities scarcely to be found in any one life before him. He worked as a school master, an accountant, an editor, a gardener, a barber, a tailor, a shoemaker, a compounder, a nurse, a midwife, a naturopathic physician, and what not several times while the British Government was involved in war he used his influence among Indians also to raise an ambulance corps, and led it himself to pick up the wounded and nurse them. Everywhere he passionately tried for perfection-both of the work and of himself. And selfless work widened his heart, deepened his convictions, increased the number of his followers and supporters, and ultimately his silent self-denial won the admiration of people all over the

world who began to see that the high ideals of religion and morality were applicable even in political life.

2. Check your Progress

1. Explain Gandhi's Life in Africa

1.4 AS THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LEADER OF INDA

With this unique African experience Gandhi came back to India, after about twenty years, to place himself at the disposal of his native land. Many of his intimate co-workers came with him and he founded at Sabarmati. (Bombay) a farm and training center and named it Satyagraha Ashrama. His primary attention was to social service. He was determined to work for the removal of all social superstitions like untouchability, purda system, etc., to bring about unity between the Hindus and the Muslims, and to encourage the spread of cottage industries like spinning and weaving which could give employment to the vast majority of villagers who sat idle during some portion of the year. But gradually he was invited by the peasants, laborers, and others to solve their problems. He began to apply the method of truthfulness and love and to organize the people to make them nonviolent soldiers to win their righteous struggle against the British Government and the capitalists. By the increasing success of this method, Gandhi was gradually installed in the hearts of millions as their supreme leader.

He became fully convinced that the method which succeeded in the solution of smaller problems could also be successfully applied to the greatest problem of his country political slavery. But it could be applied only when the people could follow the path of truth and nonviolence. This demanded that they should first of all analyse themselves to find out their own defects

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which had made foreign rule possible. They should then purify themselves by removing their vices and should express their unanimous determination to be free. If the rulers still did not agree, all cooperation with the Government should be withdrawn by the people, which would automatically paralyze the Government, the machinery of which was ultimately run by the people. It was not, however, an easy method. Yet by repeated attempts through untold persecution and suffering Gandhi ultimately led India to freedom in 1947-thanks largely also to the moral pressure of the world at large, particularly of America, whose sympathy was roused by the high ideals and the nonviolent methods adopted by Gandhi.

For Gandhi the political freedom of India was not, however, the end, but only an important means. If India won freedom by the method of nonviolence, the method could be further extended for the solution of other problems in India and the world at large. So, though he was nearly eighty years old, he continued his mission of removing social evils and disharmony by his daily routine of work and worship until he was shot to death in 1948, ostensibly for his love of peoples other than those of his community.

Even this brief account of Gandhi's life and experiments would be incomplete without some mention of his wife, Kasturbai Gandhi, who was always at his back like a shadow and, therefore, out of the limelight. She was his life's companion from the teens to the seventies. They grew together in body, mind, and spirit; worked together to raise their family of four sons, and their adopted "untouchable" girl; cooked and cleansed for their small family in earlier life, and for the bigger international family founded in South Africa and in India. She was the type of old Indian unobtrusive womanhood which claimed neither any separate existence nor any separate recognition. But yet, by complete self-effacement and identification with her husband, she enjoyed all the silent glory of a merged and united existence. She was with him in India and Africa, at home and in the community, in the kitchen as well as in prison. She followed all the zigzag path of trial and struggle through which Gandhi emerged from the narrower life of personal ambition to the wider life of love and service of God incarnate in

downtrodden humanity. She also helped him gradually to transform love of the flesh into love of the spirit, and to concentrate all his energy on his social and political work.

It is important to add that Mrs. Gandhi, in spite of her submissive nature, also ruled and was often even feared. For example, when he was about to die of dysentery and no doctor could make him give up his self-chosen dietary restrictions, it was she who persuaded him even to break a vow and to take goat's milk which pulled him through. As his American biographer, Louis Fischer notes: "Gandhi feared neither man nor government, neither prison nor poverty nor death. But he did fear his wife." It was again an example of the conquering power of self-effacing love. The world never realized her quiet service and greatness until kind death liberated her soul from the burden of decaying flesh and she was found overnight reigning as "Ba"- the mother-in the heart of the nation-of India which Gandhi used to call his one big family. Millions of rupees flowed in spontaneously in response to an appeal to the nation for establishing Kastur Ba social service net-work throughout the country.

Tagore, the poet Nobel laureate of India and also one of the regenerators of modern India, accommodated in his campus at Santiniketan Gandhi's South African Party when it first came to India. He described Gandhi as "Mahatma (i.e. the Great Soul) in a beggar's garb." And the appellation of Mahatma stuck to him in spite of his bitter protest against it, when he saw later that it created in the people's mind the idea of him as a divine incarnation who could perform miracles and was able alone to take care of India's problems. Though he as the model of humility, he never believed in false humility. So we should fully accept what he said, again and again, namely that he was an ordinary human without any special prerogative or divine authority, neither a prophet nor a perfect being.

1.5 LETS SUM UP

This is the most important fact for us, ordinary men and women. Unlike most of the greatest men of the world, Gandhi was not born great, but he made himself great through struggle and experiment, with the help of two qualities, which every one of us can cultivate more and more, as Gandhi did, namely, love of Truth and love of all fellow beings. Gandhi can be a model and hope for all. His life shows that evet an ordinary person has within him a capacity for increasing perfection that can work miracles, that is, things which would ordinarily be regarded as impossible.

In the light of this long life, which Gandhi rightly described as a series of experiments with truth, we can now try to understand his philosophy.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Gandhi: 19th Century Indian Freedom Fighter

Jains : Followers of Jainism

Vaishnavites: Followers of Bhagwan Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu

1.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write a biographical sketch of Gandhi
2. Gandhi 's thoughts emerged with time. comment

1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Answer to Check your Progress- 1

- Life in Porbandar
- Life in Rajkot
- Studies in England

2. Answer to Check your Progress- 1

- As a lawyer
- Emerging thought process
- Learnings in South Africa

UNIT -2 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI

STRUCTURE

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Gandhi's Concept of Religion :

2.2.1 Religions of India

2.2.2 Hinduism: Sources And Basic Doctrines

2.2.2.1 Hinduism And Gandhi

2.2.3 Jainism: Schools, Vows And Basic

Doctrines

2.2.3.1 Gandhi And Jainism

2.2.3.2 Gandhi And Anekantavada

2.2.4 Buddhism: Four Noble Truths And The

Eight Fold Path

2.2.4.1 Gandhi And Buddhism

2.3 Gandhi's Concept Of God:

2.3.1 realization of God

2.3.2 God Is Truth :

2.3.3 Truth Is God :

2.4 Gandhi's Concept Of World :

2.4.1 The Theory Of Creation :

2.4.2 The Nature And Status Of The World:

2.4.3 God, World And Man :

2.5 Let Us Sum Up

2.6 Keywords

2.7 Questions for review

2.8 Suggested Readings

2.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Learn about the basic foundations of Gandhi's thoughts
- know the views on Religion
- understand the holistic progress of human self

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is the comprehensive study of life and the universe as a whole. Man is the central problem of philosophy whose life is a mixture of good and evil. Mahatma Gandhi occupies a unique place as a leader of the people in the history of India. The concept of man occupies an important position in Mahatma Gandhi's thought. Mahatma Gandhi was not an academic philosopher, because he never claimed to be a philosopher and an original thinker. His idea cannot be classed with any of the well-known schools of Indian philosophy. He did not formulate any philosophical principle of his own. "I do not claim to have originated any new principle. Though Gandhi has not propounded any philosophical system in the academic sense, yet in the depth of his writings and speeches, beliefs and actions, we find a consistent world view or philosophy of life. If "philosophy" means a comprehensive study of life, understanding of the deepest problems, aims and purposes of life, the evaluation of the essential principles that govern life and their organization and practical application in both individual and social, then Gandhi was undoubtedly an authentic philosopher in the best of Indian tradition. Gandhi occupies a unique position among the philosophers. His philosophy is mainly concerned with the individual who will live and die for the ideal and with the non-violent way that will lead him to it. Like any other philosopher of civilization and culture, Gandhi tried to understand the nature of man, society, civilization, religion and host of other important concepts. Gandhi was alone who made sincere attempts to make a fruitful

combination of theory and practice. He was not only a thinker but devoted worker. He tried to practice whatever he preached. Gandhi's thought was based on Indian religious tradition. He was intensely religious from childhood. His outlook was moulded mainly by the Hindu religion, though he was influenced by the ethical deals of Jainism, Christianity and Islam. Sometimes, he called himself fan orthodox Hindu (Sanatana Hindu) because :

- (a) He believes in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures, avataras and rebirth,
- (b) He believes in the Vamashrama Dharma in a sense in his opinion,
- (c) He believes in the protection of the cow
- (d) He believes in idol worship.

Gandhi's philosophy could be called a kind of monism. His philosophy was primarily truth centered. Truth was the first and foremost principle in Gandhian philosophy. Gandhi's life was a continuous series of experiments with truth. He applied his philosophy to his own life and to practical social and political service. In this sense he was an applied philosopher. His mission was to dedicate himself in permit of Truth, and to bring about spiritual upliftment of mankind wagging against evils and injustice. Indian philosophy is generally known as darsana or vision which is called the vision of reality or truth and the philosopher is one who aspires for truth. Gandhi starts from the vision of reality as one. His life was a living symbol of poverty and simplicity, dedicated for the pursuit of Truth with a view to attainment of spiritual regeneration of mankind. As a great human being Gandhi has great contribution in social, political, economic, educational, ethical and religious field of life.

2.2 GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF RELIGION:

Gandhi's philosophy is largely based on morality and religion and his philosophy and political technique were only corollaries of his religious and moral principles. Gandhi describes religion as a mighty tree that absorbs its sap "from the moral height of those who profess that religion." 2 "Life without religion is life without principle, and life without principle is like a ship without a rudder." Gandhi had a great respect for his own religion

which he had learnt from his parents. For Gandhi, every religion aims at the same goal - that is truth. The word "Religion" has no one generally accepted definition. Different thinkers have defined religion in their own ways and for their own purpose. Literally speaking religion is a principle of unification and harmonization. It is a growing and dynamic subject. It aims at complete unification of life. Religion is a system of lived experiences. It is an art of living, through right action, how to live our daily life in harmony, within ourselves and with other persons and which would lead to a life of peace and happiness. It communicates our feelings, thoughts and acts to an object of devotion and commitment. If someone asks: when did religion begin? History would be forced to reply, "Religion began when man began." Gandhi's view of religion is highly practical. According to Gandhi man cannot live without dharma or religion, because it is a sustaining force which gives us the principle of brotherhood. Gandhi believes in the essential unity of all religions. For him every religion teaches moral and non-violent life. Religion is a principle of unification and God harmonization. According to Gandhi service to man is the service to God only. The true religion of man is to serve humanity. By religion Gandhi means self-realization. Though Gandhi was deeply religious, yet he was strongly opposed to the concept or practice of state religion. His view was that there should be a secular institution. It was under his inspiration, India went in for a secular constitution guaranteeing religious freedom to all and keeping the state away from the realm of religion. Gandhi's philosophy of morals, society and politics would seem to be only an application of his philosophy of God, nature and man.

2.2.1 Religions of India

The religions of Indian origin have some features common to them. A broad feature is that all the religions want to uplift the individual, and liberate him from the cycle of births and deaths. These religions address the individual need, rather than the divine command, as in the case of Semitic religions. Religion provides an aid to the individual, a means to overcome the cycle of eternal rebirth, and provide means of achieving it. The cycle of births and deaths is not caused by external factors, but by the individual action, which

is called *Karma*, which, when translated loosely would mean ‘deed’. The individual has to work, through the guidance provided by the religion, to escape the cycle of births and deaths, and attain ‘Moksha’ or ‘Nirvana,’ or ‘Kaivalya’ (liberation / Salvation), as per his approach. The place of worship in these religions is a shrine, where people congregate, and address the deity on an individual capacity, not in a group. Thus, these religions differ from Christianity and Islam, where people congregate and are addressed by speakers from the pulpit. Many thinkers in India, like Tilak, and leaders of “Prarthana Samaj” thought that it is a weakness of Hindu religion, and tried to make it a congregating religion, by organizing Ganesh Puja, and mass prayers. Gandhi also used to hold prayer meetings. Also, Indic religions do not have the concept of believer and non-believer, and do not try to attract people to their religion. They address only the individual good, and accept all religions to be true and have different ways to achieve salvation. Gandhi was born in a traditional Hindu family, with the society having a Jain ethos. Hence his individual values are Hindu and Jain, predominantly. He was educated in the West, and hence his work ethic is western. When he launched ‘Satyagraha’, it was a device where an individual demanded the truth on an individual basis for a social purpose.

2.2.2 Hinduism: Sources And Basic Doctrines

The word, ‘Hindu’ is derived from the word ‘Sindhu’, the main river in undivided India. The inhabitants of the riverbanks were called ‘Hindus’ in Parsi language, and the religion followed by them is known as Hinduism. Compared to Semitic religions, Hinduism is diverse, multi-faceted religion, which can be easily described as a way of life.

Sources of Hinduism

Prasthanatrayi: Three works (in Sanskrit referred to as Prasthanatrayi) are considered to be the authoritative works for Hinduism, like the Bible for Christianity and Qur’an for the Muslims. They are, *firstly* Vedas and specially Upanishads, which come at the end of Vedas, both literally and as essence. The authorship of Vedas is not known, and they are considered ‘Apourusheya’, meaning that they were not composed by any man, but

inherited by a divine transmission. Vedas also contain, in addition to Upanishads, Mantras (poetic compositions), Brahmanas (dealing with ritualistic aspects) and Aranyakas (forest treatises). *Second* authoritative work is “Brahmasutra”, which is said to have been authored by Badarayana Vyasa. It contains aphorisms, and all the three leading philosophical schools of Hinduism, Advaita (non-dualism), Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), and Dvaita (dualism) have learned treatises written by the leading proponents and teachers of these schools, commenting on the aphorisms found in this text. The commentaries of these three Acharyas (teachers) on Brahmasutra are the foundation of philosophy of these schools.

The *third* authoritative work is Bhagavad Gita, which is literally a part of the great epic, Mahabharata. The Author is Badarayana Vyasa, and it is in the form of dialogue between Krishna, whom the Indian tradition considers to be the Godhead, and Arjuna, the warrior prince. This work, whose title means ‘song divine’ has inspired many, including Gandhi.

Smriti: Smriti (meaning memory) is a collection of works that lay down the law codes, rules regarding social and personal behaviour, inter-relationship between man and society etc. Well known among them is the Manu Smriti, which is often quoted and referred all over India. Smriti literature contains Dharmashastra, as it gives the rules to follow the Dharma.

Puranas: In addition to these three authoritative works, there are *eighteen Puranas*, (ancient treatises), out of which *Bhagavata Purana* is famous. It contains the accounts of the God’s ten incarnations, which includes Krishna’s incarnation.

Epics: There are *two epics*, Ramayana (tale of Rama), and Mahabharata. The latter contains within it the Bhagavad Gita, one of the three authorities. The Epics are widely read, and incidents in it are quoted as examples.

Schools of Philosophy: There are six schools of philosophy, known as Darshanas (Darshana means an aid to see). They are Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. They are divided into two groups: one material, and another, theist. There are commentaries on these Darshanas, which have been written in the form of aphorisms. Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutra* is the work on one of the Darshanas, Yoga.

Varna system: Varnashrama, or the concept of stage of life depending on one's vocation, is also found in the dharmashastras. The concept is that each man should follow a vocation as per his Varna (literally meaning colour), which are four in number, namely, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra. Varna is supposed to be based on the kind of work one does, and the skill (guna and Karma). Vocation, based on Varna is not ordained by birth, as per Dharmashastras. For example, agriculture and animal husbandry could be practiced by people of all the four Varnas, without any restriction. Also, in the time of distress, people could follow vocations outside their Varna, with some restrictions (Apad Dharma).

Ashrama: Ashrama refers to one's stage in life. There are four ashramas- Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. First is the learning stage, second the householder's stage, third after the completion of householder's duty proceeding to the forest for tapasya (meditation) for realization of self and the final stage is freeing oneself from all the social bondage.

Purushartha: Purushartha concept is also in the Dharmashastras. And it means that a man (or a woman) has to do a deed, which results in a worthy act. The four Purusharthas are Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Vyasa is of the opinion that both Artha (wealth) and Kama (desire) have to be practiced to achieve Dharma (righteousness in life.). Moksha is the salvation from the cycle of births and deaths, and it is the last Purushartha. Thus, it was ordained that a man should work to achieve these goals, all the time.

2.2.2.1 Hinduism And Gandhi

Gandhi was a strong believer in Hinduism, which he called the 'Sanatana Dharma' (the eternal religion). He wrote, "Hinduism of my conception is no narrow creed. It is a grand evolutionary process as ancient as time, and embraces the teachings of Zoroaster, Moeses, Christ, Mohammad, Nanak, and other prophets I could name." Then, he quotes a verse from Manusmriti, which translates as follows:

"Know that the true religion is one which the wise and the good and those who are ever free from passion and hate follow and which appeals to heart.

Notes

Gandhi defined 'Hindu' in *Young India* of 14-10-1926. According to him, a Hindu is one

who believes in?

- o God
- o Immortality of the soul
- o Transmigration
- o Law of Karma
- o Moksha

And one who practices:

- o Truth and Ahimsa in daily life;
- o Cow -protection in its widest sense;
- o Tries to act according to the laws of Varnashrama.

Gandhi had read the classics early in life, from 1907, onwards, but his intense study of the scriptures happened when he was in the Yerawada jail, near Pune, from March, 1922 to February, 1924. His jail diary indicates that he read about 150 books, most of which were classics, including scriptures. At that time, he was 54 years old, young enough to exert and old enough to understand.

Gandhi's view of scriptures may look very personal and revolutionary, but he had his own way of interpreting the ancient texts and scriptures. To an American, who subscribed herself as a lifelong friend of India, he wrote, "non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. I do not regard Jainism and Buddhism as separate from Hinduism" (*Young India*, 20-10-1927). The influence of Bhagavad Gita on Gandhi was enormous. "I have studied Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta, and other scriptures of the world with the same reverence that I have given to Gita. They have illuminated many a passage in the Gita." 'I run to mother Gita whenever I find myself in difficulties and up to now she has never failed to comfort me' (*Young India*, 13-11-1930). He called Gita his spiritual dictionary, for it never failed him in distress, and he found it was free from sectarianism and dogma, and had universal appeal (*Harijan*, 16-2-39). The characters in the epics did have influence on him. Harishchandra captures his heart, for his principled effort to keep his word.

Gandhi asks why not everyone should be truthful like Harishchandra. He also quotes the examples of Rama and Pandavas, who kept their word by undergoing all difficulties. He cites the examples of Prahlad, Sudama, Dhruva, and Shrivana, who gave up all worldly comforts for the sake of virtuous principles.

Of Mahabharata, Gandhi says that it is like a rich diamond mine, from which the deeper you dig the more diamonds you find. He was of the opinion that the burden of Ramayana and Mahabharata is to teach Ahimsa (letter to P.D. Gupta, 19.11.26). He has repeatedly said that both Ramayana and Mahabharata tell the story of the victory of the good over evil. In the issue of *Navajivan*, dated 6.2.1921, Gandhi vehemently declared that he is a Sanatani Hindu, or a Hindu as ordained by Scriptures. At that time, a movement against orthodox Hinduism was building up through Brahma Samaj and Prarthana Samaj; Gandhi had no hesitation in declaring that he is a 'Sanatani Hindu'. He states that he possesses in some measure the qualities described in Narsimha Mehta's song, 'Vaishnavajana', and strives to perfect and cultivate the qualities of the Vaishnava. So, he says, "I do not therefore, hesitate to call myself with all firmness, though humbly, a strict Sanatani Hindu and a Vaishnava." At the same time, Gandhi's views were iconoclastic, and rebellious. He says that he has understood the Shastras from the view of Dharma. He says that it is possible to attain Moksha (salvation) without reading the Vedas. He also says that the Shastras are not above reason and any Shashtra, which reason cannot follow, can be rejected. Gandhi has his own views on Varnashrama. He said that he believed that there are no more than four Varnas. He believed that one acquired the caste by birth, and even though one acquires the qualities and character of another, the body does not cease to belong to his Varna. He expressed his desire to cleanse the Hinduism of the caste distinctions that crept in it. He held that Hinduism has sinned by giving sanction to untouchability. Gandhi did not formally study the Upanishads, but many Upanishads were under his regular study and reference. In the Ashram prayers, part of Isa Upanishad, which, when translated, reads as follows, was recited everyday. "Enveloped by the Consciousness is everything whatever that fluctuates in the universe.

Therefore, enjoy with renunciation and do not covet what is due to others.”

The Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad gave him the concept of supremacy of Dharma over the Khshatra, the temporal power, and even the weak can overcome the strong, with the help of Satya, which is based on Dharma. Taittiriya Aranyaka, which he refers, says that everything is founded on Dharma, the highest good that drives away evil. And Satya and Ahimsa are traditionally identified with Dharma, the cosmic law that governs the human conduct. Kenopanishad also had a profound influence on him.

2.2.3 Jainism: Schools, Vows And Basic

Doctrines

Jainism, like Buddhism, started as a protestant religion against the ritualistic Hinduism. It claims great antiquity, and it is said that Aristhtanemi, the earliest monk and a teacher, died 84000 years before Mahaveera, the last ‘Teerthankara’, as the guru of ancient tradition in the Jain religion is known. Mahaveera was a contemporary of Buddha, but is not considered the founder of the religion, but the first teacher is said to be Rishabha, and Mahaveera is said to have been preceded by Parswa, in a line of 24 Tirthankaras.

Even though Jainism did not spread outside India, as it did not have preachers who could go overseas to spread the religion, it had a profound influence on life in India. It can be said that vegetarianism became the most accepted way of life in India, may be due to this religion. Also, emphasis on morals and ethics received a boost, as this religion had ethics as its main plank, and produced vast literature in all the languages upholding the path of morality and austerity.

Schools of Jainism

There are two schools within Jain religion, one being ‘Digambara’ (meaning space-clad, ie,. wearing no clothes), and the other, ‘Swetambara’ (meaning white robed). There are no major doctrinaire differences between the two cults, except for small differences like writing down the scriptures and not writing them. Also, Digambaras, the more orthodox of the two schools, maintain that perfect saints like Tirthankaras live without food, and that a

monk who owns any property or wears clothes cannot attain moksha, and that women cannot attain moksha (salvation). Later, after the two sects separated, about 84 different schools of Jainism came into existence, called 'Gachhas'. They differed from one another only in minute details of conduct. Both the schools of Jainism have preserved their separate line of succession of teachers from Mahavira downwards. But for this, the relations between the two groups have been peaceful, and both have prospered due to their faith.

Metaphysical View

The Jain view of life is unique compared to other religions, in that it categorises living beings on the basis of senses. The plants and trees are supposed to have one sense, and worms are supposed to have two senses. At the highest scale, man who has mind or reason, has six senses, so do the 'devas' (gods) and the narakas (inhabitants of hell). In between, there are creatures having five senses, like all the animals having vertebrae. The four sensed beings possess all but intelligence. They are bees, butterflies, etc. The three sensed beings are ants, bugs, etc. In Jain philosophy, the four elements earth, water, fire and wind are animated. Thus, the whole world is full of living beings, and the whole space is packed with minute beings, called 'nigodas'. These 'nigodas' replace the space emptied by the souls that are liberated. Further, the reality according to Jainism is of two types, *jiva* and *ajiva*. When liberated from Karma, the *jiva* is a pure spiritual being. If *jiva* is tainted by Karma, he becomes impure, just like the brightness of the lamp is reduced by soot. The *jiva*, when it comes under the influence of the Karmic forces, is like gold covered with rust. When the person attains the *jnana* (ultimate knowledge), he starts shining like gold from which rust has been removed. By practising the ethics, the *jiva* can get rid of the Karma, and get back his original purity.

The other part of reality, *ajiva*, consists of Dharma and Adharma, in addition to Pudgala, which means matter, and it is called 'astikaya' as it occupies space, and it is made of atoms, without size, and is eternal. The category of 'Akasha' is that entity which pervades the mundane universe (loka) and the transcendent region of the liberated souls (aloka), which allows the

subsistence of all other substances like Dharma, Adharma, jiva, and Pudgala. The meaning of Dharma in Jainism is not as commonly understood in Hinduism, and does not have any ethical implications. Dharma means motion, and Adharma is state of rest, which gives rise to immobility. While Dharma and Adharma have attributes of extension, the time is infinite, just as the universe is eternal. The universe goes through a number of cycles over the period of time. Dharma is the condition under which movement takes place, like water, which permits the fish to swim in it. Adharma is the one, which makes the things stable, and gives rise to immobility. Jainism takes a realistic, practical, and pluralistic view of reality. The concept of 'Ahimsa', 'Anekantavada' and 'Asceticism' are central to Jain philosophy:

1. **Ahimsa:** The doctrine of non-violence, non-injury, non-killing, is a major concept in the Jain philosophy. The concept is extended to such an extent that there should be no violence even against an enemy. Of Mahavira, the Sutras say, "Always well guarded, he bore the pains caused by grass, cold, fire, flies, and gnats. In his travel, when the dogs bit him, when he was struck with a stick, when they cut his flesh, he endured them all, undisturbed, proceeded on his way to Nirvana".

Ahimsa extends to all forms of life. It is the first among the five vows taught by Mahavira. A man should neither kill living beings, nor help others to do it. Hence as a precautionary measure, one should meditate on five things: carefulness in speech, carefulness of mind, in walking, in lifting and laying down things, and thoroughly seeing one's food and drink.

Ahimsa produces the Karma that liberates one from the karmic elements, (that make one get struck in the cycle of birth and death).

All the monks and orthodox Jains practice the principle of Ahimsa even today. They strain the water in white muslin before drinking it. The monks clean the area where they sit and where they walk, with a small broom, so that they do not harm the insects by stepping on them. They do not take food after the sunset, for the fear that they may not be able to see the food and water clearly, and by that act, they may harm the insects and lowly creatures. The principle of ahimsa is not just borne out of compassion for the fellow creatures, but causes Karma that leads to the freedom from bondage. Jainism

has devised *five vows* and *three jewels* to get over the Karma that lands one in the cycle of births and deaths. Apart from the first vow, *Ahimsa* (non-violence), the second one is *Satya* (truthfulness), the third is *Asteya* (non-stealing), and fourth one is 'brahmacharya (abandoning lust for all kinds of things). And the last is 'aparigraha'(nongreed, non-attachment). The five vows are to be Practiced according to the status of the individual. For a monk the vows are very strict and flexible for a householder. The strict practice is referred to as *mahavrata* and a relaxed interpretation of the rule for a householder is called *anuvrata*. For the householder *brahmacharya* means monogamy, and *aparigraha* means possession of only essential commodities. But a monk cannot own anything, and if he owns, he cannot attain salvation. He has to Practice the five vows and three 'jewels', with care and caution, without any concession though it is slightly relaxed in the case of a householder. The monk has to aim at *kevala*, the perfect knowledge, or the knowledge par excellence, which liberates him from the cycle of births and death. All the vows and jewels are to be Practiced simultaneously, unlike in Hinduism, where one can choose one's own path according to his disposition. The *three jewels* are *samyak darshana* (right faith), *samyak jnana* (right knowledge) and *samyak charita* (right character). A monk, or a householder, has to practice all the three jewels, and should not stray away from them, to escape from the 'Karma' that leads to bondage.

2. Anekantavada: Anekantavada is the central theme of Jain philosophy. It reconciles the stand of Vedanta philosophy that the nature of reality is unchangeable and that of Buddhism that there is no unchanging substance and everything is changing, and there is a universal flux (*aniccha*). It views reality as being pluralistic, and is expressing itself in many forms, and no absolute statement of reality is possible. Unlike Western dualistic approach, which states, 'either it is so or it is not', this Jain epistemology emphasises seven. i.e. *Sapta Bhangi* that are (seven situations), as following:

- a) A thing may be
- b) A thing may not be
- c) A thing may be or may not be

- d) May be is, but inexpressible or indescribable
- e) May be is not and inexpressible
- f) May be is, and not expressible
- g) May be is, is not, and inexpressible.

These seven situations exhaust the possibilities of reality, and lead to the spirit of free enquiry. This principle prevents intellectual arrogance, and gives person humility to listen to the argument of other person and appreciate it. The example of several blind men seeing the elephant, and each describing differently, one declaring that it is like a snake, feeling the tail, other saying that it is like a pillar, feeling the leg is the classic example of this perception. The complexity of the truth should make the seeker of truth humble, and make him accept the point of view of others with respect. This philosophy of the Jains contributed to the tolerance of different thoughts in India.

3. Asceticism: According to the Jain tenets, which are based on the ethics and *jewels* given above, asceticism should be followed all through life, not just in the fourth stage of life, as in Vedic religion. It does not mean that a person should lead a life devoid of joy and bliss, but lead a life in right path, which produces good results and prevents the person from indulging in bad Karma. Taking a practical view, it is advised to steer clear of the pitfalls, fully knowing them. The vows of asceticism are very strict for the monk, or mendicant, who cannot consider anything to belong to him, whereas a householder can claim limited possessions for carrying on the normal life. The purpose of practicing this is to reduce the hold of Karma, and make man follow an uncluttered life voluntarily, so that he can proceed on the way to achieve his goals. The first goal is to achieve the state of *Kevala*, the state of supreme knowledge. The other one is to see his world more clearly. The first step in understanding the life is to understand its limitations. This principle does not mean running away from the world, or becoming passive.

The Jain emphasis on austerities is famous all over India. Fasting is an essential austerity, which can be followed by the monks and householders in different ways. A monk cannot claim to possess anything, and the householder has to have limited possessions. The austerities are both mental

and physical. Jainism is known for its physical austerities, which to a layperson look extremely difficult and self-punishing. But the goal of all these, including fasting, is self-purification, to overcome the evil effects of Karma and nothing else.

4. Non-Theism: Jainism does not recognise God to be maintainer or creator of the world order. One sutra (aphorism) urges the mendicant not to believe in the power of God. The Jain view denies that the world is an effect, caused by an all-powerful reality, and asks, if a Supreme Being created the world, who created the Supreme Being. If one has to assume that God made the universe, then the same argument should apply to the man who digs the ground and claims that he created new space. Mahapurana, a Jain classic, holds that no one should be attributed for creating this world. If God created the world, where was he before the creation, the Purana asks. Jains saw that the world operates as per the natural law, and prevented men from rationalizing their deeds in terms of God's will. Only the man is responsible for himself, and by following a good path, he should attain freedom from Karma, and no supernatural being will come to his help. The views of Jainism on God or Supreme Being are same as that of the Buddhist school. The seventh and sixth centuries before Christ saw great upheaval in the beliefs of India, and Jainism came up to satisfy a particular need of the hour.

2.2.3.1 Gandhi And Jainism

Gandhi acknowledges the influence of Jainism in his upbringing, and subsequent career; his entire outlook is molded by Jainism. Porbandar, where he was born, and the state of Gujarat, where he received his early education, has a significant Jain population. The first influence on Gandhi was that of his mother, who took up fasting for self-purification, even though they were not Jains. Fasting was a part of her life, and this influenced the children profoundly. Even later, when he undertook fasting for self-purification, the fasting of his mother, which was a regular affair, was at the back of his mind. His mother would take up a kind of fasting, where she would not eat without seeing the sun. The children would line up outside, to spot the sun on a cloudy day, and when they spotted him, would call out the

mother to see. Gandhi recalls, that ‘by the time she came out, the sun would disappear, disappointing all the children’. Fasting, which is essentially an all-religious practice, has acquired the flavor of Jainism in Gujarat, and it had an influence on Gandhi. Just as the Jain tenets preach fasting for self-purification, Gandhi would also do it for the same purpose, not to pressurize or influence others. Gandhi also followed the asceticism, as enjoined by the Jainism, though he did not accept people calling him an ascetic. His concept of simple living and high thinking is the one prescribed by the religion. For the inmates of Sabarmati Ashram, he prescribed eleven vows, out of which many are vows of the Jainism. There were eleven vows that were prescribed to the residents of the Sabarmati Ashram. The first five vows of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, Brahmacharya, and non-possession were extended to suit the requirements of the Ashram. The first five are the vows of Jainism, and he said that all of them are inter-related, and the violation of any one of them would lead to the total violation of the entire code of conduct of the Ashram. Ahimsa for Gandhi was not just a means or a way, but a creed and a religion, a philosophy of life. When the civil disobedience movement turned violent, in a village called Chauri Chaura, Gandhi withdrew the entire movement, stating that the people were not ready for the principle of non-violence, and that the movement has to be resumed after the country was ready for that. He writes, “non-violence is a spiritual food we have to take continually. There is no thing as satiation” (Harijan, 2.4.1938). Gandhi defined non-violence in different contexts and circumstances, and some of them are inspired by the Jain thought-form:

- Non-violence is a law of suffering.
- Not a weapon of the weak.
- Soul force, an attribute of the soul.
- As long as physical existence is there, perfect non-violence cannot be Practiced.
- Goodwill towards all life.
- Not being violent even to snakes, scorpions and other poisonous creatures.

2.2.3.2 Gandhi And Anekantavada

If Gandhi did not take an extreme stand on any issue, we may say that it is the result of inherent Jain tenet of Anekantavada, which does not take a rigid stand on any issue, but aims at approaching the truth with humility, with respect to the opinion of the other person. When someone pointed out that there was contradiction between his two statements, he said that always, the later statement should be taken, and the earlier statement should be ignored, as it was made under the circumstances that existed earlier. Gandhi writes in *Young India*, 21.1.1926: “My Anekantawada is peculiarly my own.....I *Indic Religions: Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism* 1920 *Philosophy of Gandhi* very much like the doctrine of manyness of reality. It is this doctrine which has taught me to judge a Mussalman from his point of view and a Christian from his. Formerly, I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me and vice versa. I want to take the whole world in the embrace of my love.” Gandhi’s theory of Karma also comes close to the Jain perception. In Jainism, Karma is both the cause and the effect. Karma is a cause for getting the past corrected, and also necessary for future, so that good deeds lead to good happenings in future, as per the belief of Gandhi. Gandhi’s adherence to the tenet of Ahimsa is legendary, and his nonviolent resistance attracted the world attention, and brought in many practitioners, who by following the principle, brought about dramatic changes in their society.

1. Check your Progress

1. Discuss the impact of Jain tradition on Gandhi.

2.2.4 Buddhism: Four Noble Truths And The

Eight Fold Path

The Life and Time of Buddha

The seventh and sixth centuries before Christ were a time of turmoil and upheaval in Indian philosophy. There were at least three currents of thought. The first was that of sacrificial Karma, and by the force of magical rites, one could achieve his desire. The second was that of Upanishads, by which the self-realization was the ultimate goal, and everything else was unimportant. The third was the nihilist school of thought, which propagated that there was no law, no abiding reality, and everything comes to being by some unknown fate. At such time, Buddha was born.

Buddha was born near Kapilavastu, a small town north of Banares, in Nepal, in 563 B.C. His father, a king of Sakya tribe, named his son as Siddhartha, the wish fulfilling one. The sages warned his father that his son would become a ruler or a mendicant; his father surrounded him with great luxury, so that he is not affected by the day-to-day life of the common people. One day, travelling through the city, Siddhartha first saw a man crippled by old age. Then after that, he saw a man, rendered helpless by fever, then a corpse being carried to the cremation ground, and finally a wandering mendicant with calm and serene composure. Seeing all these, he was moved so much that he decided to forsake all his luxuries and seek the truth. He returned to the palace, and had a look at his wife and son for the last time, and set out on his 'great renunciation' that very night. He entered the forest for meditation. Hoping to get enlightenment, he spent six years in penance, but with no results. Near Bodh Gaya, he met five ascetics. Soon, he realized that they could not help him, and set out to attain enlightenment through meditation. For seven weeks, he sat under a papal tree, and according to legend, evil forces tried to dissuade him from his goal. Determined, he carried on, and at the end of seventh week, he arrived at the much-sought enlightenment. Then he became the Buddha, the enlightened one, and the exalted one. His enlightenment occurred around 528 B.C. His first disciples were the five ascetics. Thus began the Sangha, the Buddhist ascetic order. For the next forty years, he travelled and preached, gathering more and more followers. In his eightieth year, when he was journeying to Kusinagar, with his disciples, he realized that his end was near, as he suffered from food poisoning. All the followers gathered, and Buddha preached his last sermon,

and told them to work for their deliverance, and attain 'nirvana'. Thereafter, he gave up his worldly body, and remained in the world as source of enlightenment.

Early Buddhist Literature: The early Buddhist literature is in Pali language, and consists of three different collections. The first is called the Sutta, that relates to the doctrines; the second is Vinaya, relating to the discipline of monks; and the third is Abhidhamma, which has the same subject as Sutta, but has dealt with it in a more theoretical and technical manner.

Sects in Buddhism

There are two sects in Buddhism, by name, Hinayana and Mahayana. 'Hinayana' means a smaller vehicle and the 'Mahayana' means a bigger vehicle. (Hina:small, Maha:big, Yana:vehicle).The ultimate goal of the Hinayana adherent is to attain his own Nirvana, whereas the ultimate goal of the Mahayana adherent is to not only seek his own salvation, but also to seek the salvation of all beings. The Hinayana goal was lower, and hence the instruction he received, the efforts he made to achieve salvation was lower than what a Mahayana adherent would be expected to do. The Hinayana adherent could achieve salvation in three lives, and the Mahayana adherent had to go on and on to achieve his own salvation, and the salvation of all beings. Since the goals are different in matter and substance, the sects get the names accordingly.

The Four Noble Truths

Buddha's teaching had *four noble truths*. They are:

1. There is suffering (dukkha) in the world.
2. The suffering has a cause
3. The suffering can be overcome by removing the cause of suffering
4. The eight-fold path to salvation is the means of overcoming suffering.

Firstly, suffering is universal, and no one is exempt from sorrow and disappointment. The *second* principle clearly indicates that there are specific causes of suffering, and Buddha declared that the desires are the great causes of suffering. Cravings for wealth, power, fame, and material things, thinking that they would bring happiness, are the root cause. Instead of bringing

happiness, craving stimulates greed, jealousy, and anger that cause violence. The only way to get away from suffering was to move away from desire. The *third* truth, based on the cause and effect relation, states that suffering can be made to cease by removing the cause of suffering. Buddha stated that there is a determinable solution as well as the cause. Just as an effect is caused due to a prior event, it can be overcome by a subsequent act to remove the cause. The *fourth* noble truth indicates that suffering can be overcome by following the eight-fold path, which is interrelated.

The Eight Fold Path

The eight fold path is as follows:

- 1. Right views:** Truth should be separated from the falsehood, right from the wrong, and immortality from the death. When the right view is grasped one realizes the rightness of the four noble truths.
- 2. Right resolve:** After knowing the truth, one should resolve to practice it. He should move steadfastly in the direction of the truth he has discovered. Taking a step in the right direction, he is one step nearer to the goal.
- 3. Right speech:** The third step is Right speech. The Buddhist text, Dhammapada says if a man speaks or acts with evil thought, evil will follow, like the wheel following the foot of the ox that draws carriage. In his 'Sermon on Abuse', Buddha underlines the importance of not slandering or vilifying another.
- 4. Right conduct:** The fourth step is the right conduct. Thinking and talking are incomplete without action. Right resolution and right speech should lead to the right conduct. The five important principles for right conduct are abstaining from destroying life, from theft, fornication, lying and drunkenness.
- 5. Right livelihood:** The fifth step is the right livelihood, as it enjoins one to earn the livelihood by honest means. A living can be earned without harming others. Any livelihood, which debases and cheapens life or uses others for achieving one's own ends, is not right.
- 6. Right effort:** The sixth step is the right effort. Continuous effort is needed to reach one's goal, and evil thoughts have to be banished and right ones have to be adopted.

7. Right mindfulness: The seventh step is the right-mindfulness. The quality of thought determines the person's life, and Buddha says, just as the rain breaks through an ill thatched house, so passion will break through an unreflecting mind. Mind is the source of bliss or corruption.

8. Right concentration: The eighth step is the right concentration, an intense form of right-mindedness. Right concentration separates the good from the evil, and the truth from falsehood. It perfects one's wisdom and virtue.

The four noble truths provide both the goal and means of reaching it. The eight-fold path was described by Buddha as the 'middle path', a path between indulgence and mortification. He said that the truths are not divinely revealed, but are a product of reason and experience. They allow one to be in line with Dhamma (righteousness), and view the reality in terms of Karma, and based on the doctrine of 'aniccha' (impermanence).

2. Check your Progress

1. Examine Eight Fold Path to *Nirvana*.

2.2.4.1 Gandhi And Buddhism

Gandhi considers all the great religious leaders as great teachers. He says, "Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad- they were all warriors of peace in their own style. We have to enrich the heritage left by these world teachers" (Harijan, 28-1-1939). "Gautama himself, when he saw oppression, injustice, and death around him and when he saw darkness in front of him, at the back of him and on each side of him went out in the wilderness and remained there fasting and praying in search of light"(Speech at a public meeting in Toungoo, Burma, 18.4.1929).

Following are the excerpts of his speech delivered as reply to the Buddhists' Address, Colombo, on November 15, 1927.

“It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India today to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism”. “Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in Vedas, and which were overgrown with weeds.”

“Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation”.

“His whole soul rose in indignation against the belief that a being called God required for His satisfaction the living blood of animals in order that he might be pleased-animals who were his own creation. He therefore, reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper”.

2.3 GANDHI’S CONCEPT OF GOD:

Gandhi was essentially a man of religion. His ultimate aim of religion is self-realization, which presumes faith in God and constant pursuit of truth. The concept of God is the most important, most universal concept of religion. The Hindu conception of God is so subtle and comprehensive that it is not easy to specify it. Though infinity perfection, absoluteness is constantly predicated of Him, but at the same time it is clear that God is beyond all predications. Therefore, God as a supreme person with three-fold aspects as creator, preserver, destroyer of Hindu’ s popular view cannot be ruled out as unrooted in tradition. With his theistic conviction, Gandhi expressed his deep faith in the reality o f God. God occupies the supreme place in Gandhi’ s philosophy. His deeper thought moves around God. God is the basis o f his religion and a key to his entire thought and activities.

A s Gandhi belonged to an orthodox Vaisnava family; he is greatly influenced by the Vaisnava theists in the formation o f the concept o f God. Gandhi conceives his God to be Eternal, the Unborn, the One without a second. “God is certainly one. He has no second” God is the highest reality, the highest value and the highest end. The very earliest historical records

that we possess indicate that man has always sought to explain the existence of the universe and his existence on the earth. And when he inquires, he gets a solution in the concept of God. God is the creator; infinite designer, man's beginning and end. He is the creator; preserver and destroyer of the universe. God is Omnipotent, Omniscient, all in all. God is the indescribable entity which is unknowable but can be experienced. God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality; god is fearless; lie is the source of light and life; but transcends all. God is conscience; the atheism of the atheist, and transcends speech and thought. For those who need his presence, He is a personal God. He is Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent and a great democrat, since He gives us freedom to choose between good and evil. Different thinkers give different conceptions about God. According to Radhakrishnan when the Supreme Reality is viewed in relation to cosmos, we call it God. God is the absolute from the cosmic point of view and the Absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God. God is conceived by him as a creator of the world, an Omnipotent, an Omnipresent. God as person is deeply concerned in the affairs of the world. He is the friend, the Holy judge and good and the loving redeemer of mankind. God is both transcendent and immanent. Radhakrishnan's concept of God as Omnipotent, Omnipresent, good and love is similar to Samkara's Isvara who is the Creator, Governor and Judge of the universe. Robindranath Tagore conceives of the ultimate reality as the personal God, the infinite Being, who includes all finite souls and the world of matter. According to him God is Super person who is in the innermost shrine of our own heart. The goal of the individual soul is to get united with the infinite Person of God. Swami Vivekananda urges that if there is God, that God must be both the efficient and the material cause of the Universe; both the creator and created. There is only one Existence, the infinite in which we dream all these dreams. Atman is the only Reality. This Atman or self is the eternal God. Gandhi believed in the absolute one-ness of God. For Gandhi God is the only Reality and is all that exists. Gandhi declared, "He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind." God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know To me God is truth and love

God are fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet he is above and beyond all these.....He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith.⁸ “God alone is and nothing else exists.”⁹ Gandhi’s idea of God is largely the product of the Hindu conception of God. God is the first principle of the universe. God is that indefinable something which all feel but which we do not know. A living, unshakable faith in God, an insistence on the primacy of spirit, is the core of his philosophy. So immovable in his faith that he feels that he may live without air and water but not without God; and that even if he were cut to pieces, God would give him the strength not to deny Him. As Gandhi says “I am surer of His (God’s) existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in the room. Then I can also be testing that I may live without air and water but no without Him. You may pluck out my eyes but that cannot kill me, You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God, and I am dead. You may call this a superstitions that I hug.”

2.3.1 Realization Of God :

Man is composed of both body and spirit. As body represents physical power, it may sometimes be tempted to do him sa;but man’s true nature consists in his spiritual aspects. Man is not born to explore avenues to amass, worldly riches. His ultimate goal is no less than the realization of God. Man is born with brute nature but he is born to realize God who is seated in him; that particular privilege has made him man distinguishing him from other lower creatures. The ultimate goal of man is also realization of the divinity and for this realization man need constant Sadhana both external and internal. Radhakrishnan says, “there is an insistent need in the human so to come to terms with the unseen reality.” Gandhi lays emphasis more and more on the effort of the individual than on his attainment, lie attaches more importance to the inward gains than to outward attainments which do not touch the Soul. Man is religious by nature. Belief in one God is the corner stone of almost all religions. The only one reality which is God is nothing else but truth and non-violence is the means of realizing Him. According to Gandhi God can never be realized by one who is not of the pure at heart.

Identification with God is impossible without self-purification. Moral life is necessary for spiritual purification. Gandhi believed in the inherent goodness of human nature. Man can lead a moral life by controlling his desires and impulses with the guidance of conscience and reason. Without moral basis and development there cannot be any spiritual growth. God realization is the highest good of man and that is only possible by truth, for, God is truth and truth is god.

2.3.2 God Is Truth :

Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God. All his activities social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. A firm living faith in God is the basis of religion and runs through Gandhi's entire philosophy. To Gandhi, God is life, goodness is God, Man tries to become good because he wants to reach and realize God. Even a living faith in non-violence is impossible without a living faith in God. God is that indefinable something, which we all feel, but do not know. According to Gandhi, God is Truth. "To me God is truth and love, God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness, God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond us" God is thus for him all pervasive reality, immanent in man as well as in the cosmos. At the same time, God is transcendent, for He is in us and yet above and beyond us. According to Gandhi God is truth. Like the Hindu religious leaders, Gandhi conceived God in terms of "Satchidananda". Like them, he felt that God is the very personification of Sat, Chit and Ananda or Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. His argument is that where there is truth, there is knowledge and where there were true knowledge, there would always be bliss. Sorrow would have no place where there is bliss. Hence we call God as Sat- Chit-Ananda denoting that God combines in Him, truth, knowledge and bliss. The Upanisadic seers declared Brahman to be Sat-Chit and Ananda and identified truth with reality. In saying that God is Truth it does not mean "is truthful". Truth is not mere attribute of God but it simply means "being" or "is". Nothing "is" or exists in reality except truth. Therefore the more truthful we are the nearer we are to God.

2.3.3 Truth Is God :

A study of the Gita made a deep impression on Gandhi's mind which was the beginning of his active involvement with religion or his quest for truth. He deeply studied the classics of Hindu religion and at the same time he read Tolstoy's "Kingdom of God is within you" and the Bible. His religion was synonymous with truth and rightness which is equally stressed by all the known religion of the world. According to Gandhi, God is the source of Light and Life, and yet he is above and beyond us. Gandhi in his early musing believed god to be Truth, since the word "salya" is derived from Sanskrit word "sat", which means "is" or "exist". By asserting God to be truth, he implied that God alone is real or "God is Truth". "Gandhi is conscious that God is, strictly speaking, not a person, but Truth, His own law." Because the concept of God is, deeply problematic, different people put forward diverse theories regarding God, But in case of Truth there is no ambiguity. There are no two ways of looking at truth. Truth is always to be found in everyone of us, in one form or the others; only that we do not recognise it. "I never found a double meaning in connection with truth. Hence the definition "Truth is God" gives me greatest satisfaction." Everyone interprets it in the same manner. The meaning of truth is clear and obvious, it is universal.

Many people, for instance, the Atheists deny the existence of God, but they cannot possibly deny the existence to Truth. Even the Sceptics, who doubt everything, cannot doubt the notion of Truth. There is none who doubts the notion of Truth. Thus Gandhi emphasized on Truth rather than God. He emphatically declared, "I don't care for God if he is anything but Truth". Truth is God because truth is always to be found in every one of us. Gandhi not only considered Satya or Truth as "the most important name of God" or "the only correct and fully significant name of God"; he treated Truth itself as God. Hence he has written : " In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say God is Truth."

And the tool for achieving this Truth as God is only through the path of Satyagraha which means insistence on Truth. Thus Gandhi has given a new definition of religion as devotion to Truth, as according to him Truth, being

the highest principle, is God. In fact Truth and God are one and the same. Truth is the only Reality that is called by the name of God, and religion consists in devotion to truth. There is no religion higher than truth and righteousness. Gandhi's view that Truth is God is a "revolutionary idea in the field of Theology". "The term God is interpreted by different religions and thinkers in different ways, to the extent that they go to wars of destruction of each other. Moreover, for one to have faith in God, one has to be convinced that God is Truth. So Truth has priority and unless Truth gives a green signal, God cannot have entry. By declaring Truth is God (Supreme Power) Gandhi has thrown every individual seeker on his own natural faculties and power to seek the Truth of his own finding rather than any readymade conception of God in currency." Thus Gandhi transferred the responsibility of establishing a basic concept from external authority of the highest significance and tradition to one's own internal conviction arrived at by an honest effort of all the instruments of cognition. This invests every human being with an inherent dignity alone with the necessity of finding out one's own truth, so that he may live by it and if necessary, die for the same. "For Gandhi, God had no form nor was God a person. In other words, he believed in a spiritual presence everywhere and all the time behind and beyond all phenomenal existence - that presence alone was the eternal reality. For Gandhi, God was truth, God was love, God was law, God was life and God was everything that existed in the past, that exists in the present and that will ever exist in the future." Truth for Gandhi is incomprehensible. No absolute definition of it is possible. As Gandhi says, "If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero." According to D. M. Dalta, Gandhi, being born in a Vaisnava family, took Rama as an incarnation of God. This is theism prevalent in Vaisnavism. Without God's grace, human freedom and perfection cannot be attained. Again, Gandhi assumed this world as perfection cannot be attained. Again, Gandhi assumed this world as real. He said that he could support dualism. He had no objection to anekantavada or syadvada. He did not accept absolute identity between man and God. Advaita advocates absolute identity. All this resembles the theism of Vaisnavism. His stand as an

advaitin on the following grounds : (1) For being born in a Vaisnava family, to presume Gandhi as a Vaisnavite would not be correct. He did not accept the strict principle of Vaisnavism followed by his father, (2) Again the teaching of the Gita, which shaped Gandhi's life, is nothing other than that of Advaita. Identification of the individual self with the Universal Self or Brahman is the ultimate aim of Gandhi. This is nothing but the teaching of the Advaita. (3) Moreover the Vaisnava faith is not incompatible with Advaita. There is a sect of Advaita which affirms that the ultimate reality is non-dual and prefers the Visnu-form as the personal deity to other forms. So even though Gandhi is considered as a Vaisnava, he can be an advaitin. (4) Gandhi's Rama is the eternal, unborn one. (5) Devotion implies dualism between the devotee and the deity. This dualism is not brushed aside in advaita. For the purpose of devotion, dualism is more appropriate. (6) God for Gandhi is existence-knowledge-bliss which is the nature of Brahman in advaita (7) To Gandhi, the world is the product of maya. But the dream, the world and Brahman are real from their own respective planes. This is the true explanation of advaita adopted by Gandhi. (8) Gandhi was vehemently against Gandhism or sectarianism. Advaita stands for the unity of all religions, of all living and non-living things and of all sects. Therefore T.M.P. Mahadevan concludes that in substituting Gandhism for Samkaraism, the whole teaching of advaita will remain as it is. In conclusion it may be said that D.M. Datta's stand is not devoid of reason. But, considering Gandhi's metaphysical position discussed in this chapter, T.M.P. Mahadevan's support for Gandhi's non-dualism in this connection is more appropriate, more practical and more reasonable. To Gandhi, God is a mysterious power, which defies sense-perception and rational proof but makes itself felt by a seeker. As he said, "There is an Indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. "He also observed, "The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses." Thus Gandhi

was not a dualist but a monist who believed in one all-pervasive reality. Bhikhu Parekh aptly remarks, “Like most Indian thinkers Gandhi subscribed to both the impersonal and personal conceptions of God. His language, however, was all his own. Although he sometimes used the term Brahman, he was somewhat uneasy with its historical associations and preferred to use such terms as eternal principle, supreme consciousness or intelligence, mysterious force and cosmic power, spirit or shakti. Later in life he preferred to call it Satya or Truth and thought that this was its “only correct and fully significant” description.”

2.4 GANDHI’S CONCEPT OF WORLD :

All the religions of the world, except Buddhism and Jainism, believe that God is the only creator of the world. They also generally believe that God brings the world to an end at his own sweet will.

According to Gandhi the world is a reality and God is its creator. To him, the world, the Nature is the expression of God. It is an evidence of the all-pervasive reality. Gandhi sometimes calls himself a follower of Advaita, but he cannot be regarded as follower of Advaita of Samkara, because the world is not a mere appearance to him. He never conceived the world to be an illusory and unreal Maya. The Upanisads deny the independent status of the world, which cannot exist apart from Brahman. In the Upanisads, Brahman stands for the whole reality including the world, without which, the world remains unexplained. So to explain the world, Brahman is necessary. The concept of dissolution of the world in the Upanisads indicates the impermanency of the world. Because it is true that the world which is changing is not eternal, it is said that the world is unreal. It means that it is not eternally real; but its temporal reality is not nullified.

2.4.1 The Theory Of Creation :

There is no definite theory regarding the creation of the world. Though it is not clear whether the world is an act of creation or not, there is at least one

Hindu system of thought - the Samkhya system which believes that the world is a product of an evolution of Prakrti, the primordial matter, with the help of Purusa, the nonchanging primordial consciousness. There are various mystical stories about the creation in the various texts of the Hindus, but for the most part creation seems to be a mystery and it not very clear when and how it was exactly done. There are mythical narratives regarding the creation of the world in the Visnu Purana, the Manusmriti and such other texts of Hinduism. The details of the creation myth as contained in Rg Veda and the Manusmriti very much agree with each other. In one of the hymns of the Rg Veda (X.121) Brahma, as Hiranyagarbha, appears to be the seed of all creation. This golden seed of all creation comes from Visnu himself, who is lying in the fathomless, water. The hymn says, "In the beginning was the Golden seed : once born he was the Lord of all that is". The golden seed is Prajapati the Lord of creation, who is both the transcendent God and immanent spirit of everything. There are other myths also (as in Visnu Purana) which relate that the world came out of an egg which was cut by God himself. From this presentation of the stories of creation in Hindu religious texts, one thing is clear that, God had not created the world ex nihilo. He has created it either out of certain elements existing eternally (as the Nyaya - Vaisesika system believes that God has created the world in space and time out of eternal material atoms in accordance with the previous karmas of people) or out of the materials of his own being (as Bhagavadgita and the system of Ramanuja have it). In all these theistic systems the world is taken as totally dependent upon God. In favour of world's absolute dependence upon God the idea of Trinity of Brahma, Visnu and Maheswara is well contained in Hindu belief. It signifies that God is responsible for creating, sustaining and dissolving or destroying the world.

2.4.2 The Nature And Status Of The World:

The general Hindu belief as to nature and status of the world is that, although the world is dependent upon God, it is nevertheless real. The world is a real creation of God and is a ground for human action by which his future life will be determined. Gandhi's conception of the world also follows

from his conception of God. Though he does not formulate it systematically in one place, from some of his remarks in different contexts we can have an idea of his philosophy. In Indian thought the word Samsara or jagat indicates dynamic characteristic of the universe. Continuity and change are the two characteristic features of the material or physical world. According to Radhakrishnan, there is one underlying, dynamic and creative reality out of which gradually, body, life, consciousness and self-consciousness emerge.

He says the universe is a process, it is a movement with a definite goal in view. The world has passed through the different phases of evolution, namely matter, life and mind.

Samkara Vedanta takes the world as maya or illusion. Samkara himself quite unambiguously says that although on the ultimate level, the world is not real and what is real is Brahman and Brahman alone, on the practical level the world is fully real and all its activities have a real significance.* Vivekananda says : “according to the Advaitins, the follower of Samkara, the whole universe is the apparent evolution of God. God is the material cause of this universe, but not really, only apparently. The celebrated illustration used is that of the rope and the snake, where the rope appeared to be the snake but was not really so. The rope did not really change into the snake. Even, so, this whole universe as it exists is that Being. It is unchanged, and all the change, we see in it are only apparent. The question why the world at all came about, the general answer is that the world is the lila or play of God. Sometimes, as in the Nyaya Vaisesika, the world is regarded as the product of God’s desire (Ichha). But the word “desire” does not imply here that God has created this world to fulfil some of his needs. God has no need to accomplish. He creates the world only in accordance with the requirements of the Law of Karma. 'world is maya and is like a rotating wheel. It is changing every moment, hence it is unreal. But it has something that persists. Though Gandhi was an Advaitin, at the same time he called himself an anekantavadi or syadvadi. His doctrine of love embraces the whole world and his anekantavada is the outcome of his doctrine of satya and ahimsa. As Gandhi observes, “ The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal-, it has no permanent existence. But,

though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real or unreal, and thus being called an *anekantavadi* or a *syadvadi*. But my *syadvada* is not the *syadvad* of the learned, it is peculiarly my own.... this doctrine has taught me to judge a Mussalman from his own standpoint and a Christian from its I want to take the whole world in the embrace of my love. My *anekantavada* is the result of the twin doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa*." It is evident that though there is change in the world, the world, in Gandhi's view, is real from its own plane, lie saw one in main. Moreover, as he was a man of action . He brought as the field of practising his principle of Truth and Non-violence. Therefore he said "There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no "here" and no "there" Gandhi deified the universe. So he said, "From the Imperishable unmanifest down to the perishable atoms everything in the universe is the supreme and an expression of the supreme." According to Gandhi, the world as the expression of God is an evidence of the all-pervasive reality. God is the beginning of the world and also its end. He says, "God manifests himself in innumerable forms in this universe and every such manifestation commands my reverence".'" The emphasis on the reality of the world has two implications : one in metaphysical and the other is practical - Metaphysically speaking the world is an expression of God and as such is both real and finite. The world is real because it is God's creation and it is finite because it is not itself God. From the different studies and researches of different sciences Gandhi comes to find out the reality of the Universe. According to Gandhi there is a Law governing every moment and every development in every part of the universe. "All things in the universe including the sun and the moon and the stars obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws the world would not go on for a single moment." "Gandhi perceives in the inexorable laws of nature nothing but the force or the will which maintains the world in harmony and order and saves it from destruction. This force for him is nothing but God, and the laws are nothing but the ways of the working of that force. Nature is progressing towards God Himself who is the perfect and the ultimate ideal of everything. Thus God is

the beginning as well as the end of the world. The emphasis on the reality of the world has a practical implication also. Gandhi was quite sensitive to the charms of Nature and with full conviction, he recommends a return to Nature. Nature does not merely appear to him as full of poetic charms, he also perceives in it a field for action. Gandhi feels that Nature provides to man "Karma - Sthala" - a field of action, where man can discipline his soul by leading a religious and moral life. Gandhi's deep love for Naturopathy, his recommendations to take plenty of air, water and walk barefooted are some of the evidences of his love for Nature.

Gandhi's physical habit seemed to declare: nearer to nature, nearer to health; when the body is sick, go back to nature. One of his great hobbies throughout his life was to experiment with diet to find out "the natural diet of man."

2.4.3 God, World And Man:

In Gandhi's philosophy man occupies an important position. In 1924 Gandhi declared that "the individual is the one supreme consideration." He views man in his wholeness. Man is a complex being. His body is a part product of Nature, where it grows and decays according to the laws of Nature. Gandhi has a firm belief in the evolution of man from the lower grades of animal to higher levels of humanity, guided by love, peace and harmony etc. He remarks, "that we have become man by a slow process of evolution from the brute.

We were thus born with brute strength, but we were born men in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man, and it distinguishes him from the brute creation."

As an Advaitin, Gandhi finds no contradiction between man and God and between man and lower order of creation. He is highly influenced by the Upanisadic philosophy, thus he believes in the essential unity of man and also in the rest of the whole creation. "I believe in advaita, believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives." Man's self or soul is nothing but Brahman; so man is a part of the Ultimate Reality. There is an inherent relationship between man and God..... "That Thou Art".

Here “Thai” stands for God and “Thou” stands for God in the form of man. Man has no independent existence apart from God. Man is identical with Brahman. Gandhi recognizes the spiritual unity of mankind and all individuals are manifestations of the ultimate reality. Man is not only a creation of God but a seat of the divine. True to the Indian thought Gandhi affirms a non-Darwinian view of man. Gandhi laid stress on the spiritual nature of man and the essence of the spirit of soul is freedom. It is above and beyond both matter and mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom. Man is more than matter. Man is a vibrant, living spirit, a spark of divine fire. Thus for Gandhi man is no weakling but a perpetual reservoir of strength. The strength of man is an efflorescence of the spirit which is the permanent element in human nature. Gandhi believes in the inherent goodness of man by which man can distinguish from other animals. Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil, but it is possible for a man to change the mixture so that he has more of good and less of evil. According to Gandhi, man is not a mere bundle of flesh and bone but rather constituted with a more vital force 'Soul' (atman). Our body, the material objects and all other empirical things must exist within time and space, but soul transcends time and space and is unborn, eternal, indivisible, all-pervading and self-conscious. The atman “on every destruction of the body... weaves for itself another.” We have different bodies but the soul which resides within us is one and the same. That is why Gandhi did not believe in the spiritual gain of an individual only while others around him suffer. The spiritual gain of one means the spiritual gain of all and one's fall means the fall of the whole humanity. Gandhi shares the Vedantic belief in the identity of man within his innermost being with transcendent reality. 'You and I' are chained in the same ring. Names and forms are not real but transitory. In the state of ignorance, we see many but when ignorance is removed there is unity of all lives. Thus, regarding the relation between the individual self and universal Self, so long as one thinks oneself as a distinct entity and so long as one cannot destroy this state of ignorance, there is a barrier between the two; but when one exterminates one's egotism and selfishness and swims into the ocean of humanity, one can realize the

oneness with God and other fellow beings. Gandhi believes in the Law of Karma. Hindu thought has given tremendous importance to the doctrine of Karma. A belief in rebirth goes side by side with a belief in Karma. The doctrine of Karma is taken to be both a metaphysical and moral law. Metaphysically speaking, the law explains births and formation of bodies. Our present life and body are on account of our past karmas. The Law of Karma is also conceived as a moral law. The ancient Indian seers have suggested that man's bondage and suffering are due to his own wrong actions done in the past and that right and good deeds performed in this life will bear fruit in future and will enable man to make himself free and liberated. Gandhi accepted this Law of Karma according to which, human actions are responsible not only for virtues and vices, but also for the physical conditions in which man is born. He says that man becomes victim of physical calamities only because of his own sins. A man like me cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins. The Law of Karma presupposes the existence of Soul and the concept of rebirth. Gandhi therefore said, "I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore, know that even a little effort is not wasted." Birth and death are the two forms of transformation of human body. But this process of change does not affect the soul. Death is inevitable if there is birth. Birth is the beginning of death. The existence of the present body or birth is self-evident. Just like that, rebirth, according to Gandhi, does not require any further proof. Man is always chained in the cycle of death and rebirth. No one can escape from this cycle until moksha (salvation) is attained. Here we may mention Gandhi's concept of incarnation (avatara). In common parlance, incarnation means the descent of God to human flesh and blood. But Gandhi did not take the meaning of incarnation in this way. God is already in each and everybody. In some persons, the spirit of God remains in dormant state, while it, in others, is developed. In Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Jesus etc., the spirit was fully awake. In Gandhi's opinion, "God never incarnates himself as a human being, but is, ever the same. It is human nature to call the person who has some special excellence in him an avatara." A belief in the divinity of all results in having

a nonviolent; attitude to all. Man as spirit is essentially non-violent; violence is alien to man's nature. Gandhi uses the word 'non-violence' in order to bring out the true meaning of ahimsa. Literally ahimsa means nonkilling. Non-violence is the greatest and the most active force in the world to him. He practiced non-violence in every walk of life.

According to Gandhi violence is the law of brutes which non-violence is the rule of human beings. Here Gandhi absolutely differs, with Darwinian principles of "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest." Because in his books "The Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man", Charles Robert Darwin formulated the evolutionary hypothesis that man evolved for his animal ancestor by "natural selection" in the "Struggle for existence" and deduced the law of "survival of the fittest." Gandhi said, "Non-violence is the Law of our species as violence is the law of the brutes." Anyone who objected to non-violence as the creed of the coward was reproached by Gandhi. He clarified, "Ahimsa is not the way of the timid and cowardly. It is the way of the brave to face death. He who perishes with sword in hand is no doubt brave but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is brave." Violent man is self-alienated man who does injury to his own being. Thus Gandhi gives a new individuality to man, an authenticity hitherto unknown to the earlier prophets of Society. Gandhi does not consider non-violence as a mere philosophical principle. It has a great practical value to him. As he puts it, "the rule and the breath of my life..... It is a matter not of the it, "the rule and the breath of my life..... It is a matter not of the intellect but of the heart." The practice of non-violence requires fearlessness and patience of the highest order. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. Ahimsa protects man's self-respect and honor. This law can be Practiced by all, children, adults, and even old people, in social, political and economic side also. Gandhi was only the first man who brought about change of heart by means of non-violence from the individual to the social and political plane. Me affirms nonviolence as a weapon for Satyagraha and says that the remedy by nonviolence and love for Truth is more effective than the remedy by the use of weapons. Since Gandhi believes in the presence of God in man, he refuses to suspect human

nature. It will and is bound to respond to any noble and friendly action. So Gandhi rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of human nature. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music. Soul-power can prove effective only if it is sincerely given a chance. Gandhi never advocated the idea of closed Society, where human love perishes and man is isolated and frustrated. According to him man requires a society where everybody will feel drawn to every body because all are essentially spiritual. Man is a social being who is in search of peace, justice, harmony and happiness throughout the ages. He cannot live without society. Gandhi wanted a classless society, wherein every individual got equal opportunity for his or her all round development. Gandhi's conception of this ideal society can be summed up in one word, 'Sarvodaya' means all round development of all people in which love, non-violence, truth and justice and 'service to all' would be the ideal of each citizen. Gandhi was interested in the reformation of society. He wanted a samaj called 'Sarvodaya Samaj' in place of the stale which is an instrument of oppression. The structure of his samaj built upon moral principles, humanitarianism and equality. He tried to eradicate the evils that crept into society in the name of religion. To remove the exploitation of one class by another, he stressed on the theory of trusteeship and looked for the change of heart in the rich for using their wealth in the interest of the poor. His dream was to build an ideal society where every individual should have a feeling of freedom means 'Swaraj' and took particular care to emphasis this. He says, "The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by princes and monied men." "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction.....Swaraj is to be for all Gandhi choose the BhagavadGita's path of Karmayoga (path of action) as a means to the ultimate goal of realization of Truth and set as the ultimate goal in this life the achievement of a Sarvodaya society wherein each individual will be free from want, free from exploitation, free from envy and selfishness, free from pride or the ridicule of others, free from command problems and free from external control. Man for Gandhi is a harmonious combination of all the elements which constitute his wholeness.

So he cannot do right in one department of life while he is occupied in doing wrong in another department. According to Gandhi, social betterment depends upon individual efforts for self-purification. He always emphasizes personal purification and says that it is possible to conquer evil by prolonged Sadhana.

2.5 LETS SUP UP

Gandhi was influenced by Tolstoy and Thoreau who gave importance to individual and his capability of changing society. The influence of the Bible and the Gita also led him to believe in the importance of the individual. Gandhi was a great fighter, for social reforms would become effective only when the individual reforms himself. The potential Saltva has to be actualized. Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha as the way of nonviolence, is based on the absolute freedom of the Soul to follow and abide by the truth one perceives and experiences. According to Gandhi, God is both immanent and transcendent. God is within us but also outside us as the life of the universe. He says, "God is the Creator, Ruler and the Lord of the universe and not a blade of grass moves but by His will" In spite of his faith in God, Gandhi rejected any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and that conflicts with morality and social practice. So he did not accept the Hindu Dharma Sastras in toto. He rejected all the illogical and immoral practices in Hinduism which did not appeal to his reason. His attitudes to other religions were also very liberal and he accepted all the important religions of the world as equally true. For him, religions are meant to suppress the beastly qualities in men and to enshrine their spiritual and moral characters. He always talked of ethical religion." For me morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon sand. And religion divorced from morality is like 'sounding brass' good only for making a noise and breaking heads." Thus in his view true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. Gandhi's ethical religion has an inseparable bearing on social life. Liberation did not signify isolation from the society and leading

the life of a recluse. Self-realization, according to Gandhi, is impossible without a complete identification and merging of one self with the whole humanity. He repeatedly asserted that for him there could be no realization of God apart from the service of mankind. As Joan Bondurant aptly observed, “..... despite the ever present overtones of religion in Gandhian thought, concern for human needs lies at the core of Gandhian teaching.”

2.6 KEY WORDS

Advaita,	Philosophy of Non dualism
Gita,	Holy book of India
Anekantavada,	Non Absolutism, Philosophy of Multiple Realities
Jainism,	Sramana Tradition
Buddhism.	Sramana Tradition propounded by Gautama Buddha

2.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Role of religion in alike of human
2. God is Truth and Truth is God
3. . Bring out the influence of Indic religions on Gandhi’s concept of Ahimsa.
4. Explain the sources of Hinduism.
5. . How did Gandhi conceptualize Hinduism?
6. . Discuss the impact of Jain tradition on Gandhi.
7. . Examine Eight Fold Path to *Nirvana*. Why did Buddha call them ‘middle path

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Gandhi. M.K.,- An Autobiography or the Story of my experiment with Truth. Navajiwani Publishing House. Ahmedabad, 1948.

- The Art of Living – Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1961.
- Non-Violence in Peace and War. 2nd Edition, Navajiwani Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1944.

- Satyagrah, Non-Violent Resistance. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1951.
- Selections from Gandhi, Ed. N.K. Bose, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1948.

2.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

2. Answer to Check your Progress

1

- Ahimssa
- Anekant
- Aparigraha

3. Answer to check your Progress

1

- **Right views**
- **Right resolve:**
- **Right speech:**
- **Right conduct**
- **Right effort:**
- **Right mindfulness:**
- **Right concentration:**

UNIT 3 SATYA

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Truth is God
- 3.3 Nature of the World
- 3.4 Nature of Man
- 3.5 Non-Violence (Ahimsa)
 - 3.5.1 The Technique of Ahimsa-Satyagraha
 - 3.5.2 Requirements of a Satyagrahi
 - 3.5.3 Kinds of Satyagraha
- 3.6 Lets sum up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Questions for Review
- 3.9 Suggested Readings
- 3.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Learn about Gandhi's views on Satya
- know God as Truth and Truth as God

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A student of Philosophy finds it extremely difficult to reduce Gandhi's philosophy of God to any of the accepted philosophical models. Gandhi did not have any training in academic philosophy, for him the distinction between Pantheism and Theism was not even relevant; but this can be said that Gandhi's theistic beliefs were, more or less of the Vaisnava' type. His early initiation into the Vaisnava cult, and the influence of the family

atmosphere in which he grew, implanted on his mind the rudiments of the idea of a theistic God.

Vaisnavas in India are theists par excellence. They respect the authorities of the Vedas and the Upanisads and, at times, draw their inspirations from them. But, in a general way they are not inclined to accept that advaitic trend of thought and belief that has become very prominent in India. The great Advaita Vedantist, Sankara, emphasised the reality of Nirguna Brahman, and came to think that the world which apparently looked real, was metaphysically merely an illusion created by ignorance of the individual. Naturally therefore, the Advaita Vedantist never felt the need of a Creator or a God. If the reality is essentially one, if the perception of the many is a product of an illusion-producing ignorance, then both creation and the creator become unreal.

The Vaisnava thinkers, on the other hand, accept the reality of the world, and therefore, believe in a God as the creator and preserver of the world. There is yet another, a more significant, point of difference between the Advaita Vedantist and the Vaisnava thinker. According to the former reality is an attributeless, indeterminate Brahman, and therefore, salvation consists in the knowledge of this reality. Reality, being Nirguna cannot be approached in the devotional manner, because devotion presupposes interpersonal relations. Therefore, the only way that the Advaita Vedantist recommends for attaining liberation is the way of knowledge. Vaisnava thinkers conceive God in a theistic manner, and as such, God becomes a personal God.

Now, they feel that a cold arid dispassionate way of knowledge will always fail to establish a feeling relationship with God, and therefore, will always maintain a distance from Him. God, according to these people, has to be felt and realized, and therefore, the way of feeling and devotion is the only way to salvation. Not that they deny the role of importance of knowledge altogether, but they somehow feel that devotion and emotional surrender are the essential requirements for salvation. This is the chief reason why the Vaisnava-cult is popular in India, it advocates a simple path that can be taken up by every man.

Gandhi's philosophy of God also is strictly theistic in character. It is true that at times Gandhi, more or less like an Advaitist, talks of the nirgama character of the real. But that is so because he feels that the academic distinction between 'saguna' and 'nirguna' is irrelevant for the beliefs and practices of a true believer. In fact, he feels that God is needed not merely for the satisfaction of reason or intellectual curiosity, but also for providing strength and solace. A faith in God must enable an individual to be in peace with the world. He says, "He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does. God to be God, must rule the heart and transform it." This is possible only where an inter-personal relationship is possible, and only when God is conceived as a person. Gandhi was deeply impressed by the life and practices of the saints of the Bhakti-cult, and therefore, it was not difficult for him to arrive at the conception of a personal God. He was helped in arriving at this notion of God by his studies of the Bible and the Quran.

The theistic current of Gandhi's thought at once meets with a difficulty when God and Truth are sought to be identified with each other. Truth is an impersonal principle, God as conceived by Gandhi is a person-how can the two be identified?

3.2 TRUTH IS GOD

To find a solution of this problem it is essential to enter into the thought-system of Gandhi. Gandhi was aware of the difficulty, and therefore, he very often tried to make his standpoint clear. He says, "In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God.

But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe-and I think it is the truth-that God has as many names as there are creatures and therefore, we also say that God is nameless, and since God has many forms we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us in many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on if it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description, I have come to the conclusion that for myself God is Truth.

An interpretation of this passage will bring to light the reasons for Gandhi's saying that God is Truth. Firstly, this assertion is the result of a search for a name or a category for the universal reality, that is God, which appears to defy all description. Secondly, God is described as Truth because God alone is real. Truth, according to Gandhi, is not an attribute of God, but God Is Truth. Truth, according to him, is derived from the word 'sat', and 'sat' means 'Is'. And so, by calling God Truth, what is being asserted is that God alone is.

But later on, Gandhi, instead of asserting the previous statement God is Truth', came to assert the statement. 'Truth is God'. Normally, such conversion presents logical difficulties. From the statement all men are mortal, we cannot pass over to the statement all mortals are men. Such difficulties are practically removed when the subject and the predicate are identified with each other. Therefore, one can say that there is nothing peculiar or extraordinary in shifting the emphasis from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'. But, Gandhi's reasons for bringing about this change are not as simple as that. He says, "But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be God, God is Truth above all....But two years ago I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, viz. that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth:

This shows that there is a very strong reason for bringing about this change. One reason for this change is that the word Truth is not as ambiguous as the word God. Nobody understands exactly the same thing by the word 'God', God may be pantheistic, theistic, polytheistic, or even deistic. But, the word Truth' is always clear in its significance. Again; there is yet another, a more fundamental reason, for suggesting this change. Gandhi is able to realize that it is possible to rationally doubt-even to, deny-the existence of God, but that it is self-contradictory to attempt to deny Truth. Reason can raise arguments against the possibility of God's - existence, but reason cannot reject Truth. There have been many sceptics and nonbelievers in the world, but even they cannot deny truth. In fact, Truth provides a common platform to both the theist and the atheist. Truth is the

only factor which is completely universal and comprehensive. Gandhi says that an atheist would resent strongly if he is described as a God-fearing man, but he would gladly accept his own description as a 'Truth-fearing' man. This, more than anything else, leads Gandhi to assert the primacy of Truth. Blind religious notions about God have done immense damage to mankind, and therefore, the emphasis has to shift from God to truth. He says, 'I don't care for God if He is anything but Truth.'

What is Truth? In the logical sense of the word 'Truth', truth is considered to be a property of judgment, but, in the meta physical context Truth is conceived differently it is conceived as right knowledge, as knowledge that corresponds to reality. In Indian metaphysics, at times, Truth is conceived as self-illuminating as revealing itself. Gandhi somehow combines all these meanings of the word. Truth' and then comes to identify Truth with God. In fact, in doing so he relies on, what can be called, the popular meaning of the word 'truth'. Popularly a distinction between 'Sat' and 'Satya' is not made. Gandhi explicitly asserts that the word 'Satya' is derived from 'Sat', and this leads him to identify Satya with reality.

But, a student of philosophy may raise a doubt: how can the two be identified with each other? Truth is the picture of reality grasped by human mind. How can the picture of reality be identical with reality itself? But, Gandhi seems to have solved this difficulty in his own peculiar way. The distinction between 'knowledge of an object', and 'the object of knowledge' is based on, what is known as, the Dualistic theory of knowledge. Now, there are many religious philosophers and intuitionists who reject this theory and come to assert that knowing is being. The influences that shaped Gandhi's thought -viz., The Upanisads, Christianity, thoughts of Tolstoy etc. had also similar ideas about knowledge. Naturally, Gandhi does not find any difficulty in identifying Truth with reality. Therefore, Gandhi says. 'My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth . . . the little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence.'

There are certain interesting implications of Gandhi's assertion that Truth is God. These implications have both a pragmatic value and a religious value. One very significant implication of this assertion is that the object of worship is not God but Truth. This can very well become a basis for a really universal religion because worship of Truth' is one thing that can bring persons of every caste, creed and nation together.

In the initial stages of his experiments he was a firm believer in the intimacy of God, but, in course of time he came in association with many sincere and thoughtful persons who honestly believed that the traditional idea of God was open to criticisms on account of its being a defective notion. But, even their rejection of God was based on a sincere desire to know the Truth. Gandhi at once came to realize that reason could reject anything but not Truth. He could see that all religious believers of all kinds and even the atheists could be brought together under the banner of Truth. Truth appeared to him as the only force that could unify even conflicting ideas and ideals. That led him to say, "If it is at all possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, then we must say that God is Truth But I went a step further and said Truth is God. I never found a double meaning in connection with truth, Hence the definition 'Truth is God' gives me greatest satisfaction.

This explains Gandhi's catholic attitude and his assertion that a sincere love and worship of Truth will bring together Hindus, Muslims and even Marxists and Atheists. That is why Gandhi says that there are no atheists in the real sense of the term.

Critics of Gandhi often point out that Gandhi does not give due regard to 'reason' in formulating his ideas about God. The basis of such a criticism is the fact that Gandhi most often "talks about 'the inner voice' or 'the voice of the conscience'. This is also is a fact that Gandhi appears to be convinced about the veracity of his beliefs simply on the testimony of his own inner voice. In fact, at times he even ridicules reason for all' sorts of fantastic cobwebs that it keeps on weaving. Writing in the Young India he says, "Rationalists are admirable beings, but Rationalism can be a hideous monster when it claims omnipotence for itself. Attribution of omnipotence

to Reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as the worship of stick and stone believing it to be God. I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason.

But, this only proves that Gandhi does not place the ultimate emphasis on rational demonstration of God's existence. He is convinced that God can be known only in a state of inner realization that God's knowledge can only be revealed to an individual in some sincere and sacred inner experience. Even so, at times, Gandhi does talk about evidences of God's existence. A student of philosophy who is acquainted with the traditional proofs for God's existence, can very well find elements of such proofs in Gandhi's writings. The causal argument for the existence of God makes its appearance, more or less, in the form of Descartes' Cosmological proof. Gandhi argues in the following manner: we exist, our parents have also existed, and the parents of our parents have also existed. This question can be extended further and further, and thus, it can very legitimately be asked, 'who originates the whole of creation?', who is the 'parent' of the whole universe? Gandhi feels that one can reasonably arrive at the concept of God in this way. God can be conceived as the 'parent' of the whole universe. This process of arriving at the concept of God very well resembles the causal proof, which starts with the universe, seeks for its cause and arrives at the concept of God.

One can find traces of, what is called, the Teleological proof for God's existence, in the following kind of references that Gandhi frequently gives. At various places Gandhi talks of the order and the harmony of the universe. He also says that there is a Law governing the universe. Then he argues that the order, harmony and the Law cannot be explained unless an intelligent Law-giver is presupposed. If the cause is not a unity, we cannot find unity in the universe. He says, 'I subscribe to the belief or the philosophy that all life in its essence is one. This belief requires a living faith in a living God who is the ultimate arbiter of our fate.'

But, the proof that appears to be most convincing to Gandhi is the Moral proof. In fact, Gandhi values this proof very much and very frequently makes a reference to this. He seems to be convinced that the

voice of conscience carries a dependable testimony for God's existence. Conscience, according to him represents the Divine in man. It has an awareness of the good and the bad. It sanctions the good and condemns the bad. It creates an exalting feeling when the good is done and it pricks whenever a wrong step is taken. The peculiarity about this inner voice is that whenever it speaks it speaks with an authority. Its voice appears to be obligatory. One is constrained to feel that obedience of the dictates of this voice is one's duty. Now, for Gandhi there seems to be no other explanation of this call of conscience except the fact that it is a representative of a Being who is at once the embodiment of Supreme Goodness. He clearly says, "I have no special revelation of God's will. My firm belief is that He reveals himself daily to every human being but we shut our eyes to the still small voice.

Then, at times, a reference is made to a kind of proof that can be called "Pragmatic proof." Gandhi believes that a belief in God's existence is necessary because God satisfies a very important aspect of our life. If we survey our life we find that, over and above the wants and needs of everyday existence, we do have an urge of a different kind which cannot be satisfied with the usual materialistic fulfilments of life, and which demands a spiritual satisfaction. We become keenly conscious of such an urge in the moments of anxiety and crisis, when we feel forsaken by all the worldly and materialistic ways of life. Then we clearly realize that we are in need of a supreme object of love, by having a faith in which, we can derive strength, solace, peace and even happiness. This supreme object of love is nothing but God. Therefore, Gandhi says, "He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and therefore in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love. But, the fact remains that, according to Gandhi, proofs can not serve the function of producing a faith in the existence of God. Gandhi is aware that God can be felt through actual experience. He does not outline the condition or the nature of such an experience. At times, of course he does refer to moral sense and to moral experience; but that

also is done not to outline the nature of experience, but to provide a way for testing one's religious faith. Thus, it is apparent that, according to Gandhi, God not only transcends senses, but also defies rational proofs. God is a matter of inner realization and faith.

Some other Characters of God

Gandhi never misses an opportunity of trying to describe the characters of God. The characters mentioned by him are generally theistic, but they bear the mark of Gandhi's basic conviction, namely that 'Truth is God.'

Gandhi conceives God as all-pervasive. God is the reality in which everything lives and moves. In conceiving God in this manner Gandhi is almost identifying the metaphysical reality with the theistic God, and in the process, he is also identifying character of all-pervasiveness with that of omnipresence. He says, "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power that makes itself felt and yet defies proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses.

God is also, at times, described as Law. Although this description creates the impression that God is an impersonal principle, Gandhi rises above such an impression when he says that God's Law and God are not different from each other. God himself is the Law. To say that God rules everything means simply that his Law abides.

Gandhi very often calls God 'Love'. The full implication of this description of God will be clear only when Gandhi's conception of Love and Ahimsa is fully grasped, but one thing seems to be fairly evident that there can be no other way of apprehending God than the way of Love. God is present in every one of us, and therefore, by a gradual process of extending love we can love everybody and thereby God himself. This kind of love demands a kind of a self-sacrifice—a sacrifice of the egoistic and selfish ways for the love and the good of others. Gandhi says, have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the external and to become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hands so that my service may become more certain because uninterrupted by the baser self in me.

3.3 NATURE OF THE WORLD

It is difficult to outline precisely Gandhi's view on the nature of the world, because his remarks on the nature of the world are both casual and too much scattered. Yet, an attempt can be made to organise his thoughts into a full-fledged account of the nature of the world. Nature, according to Gandhi, is the expression of God, is an evidence of the all-pervasive reality. He says, "God manifests himself in innumerable forms in this universe and every such manifestation commands my reverence.

This description of Nature has two implications: one metaphysical and the other practical. Although Gandhi does not like either to raise or to answer the question regarding the why of creation, it is apparent that metaphysically speaking the world is an expression of God, and as such is both real and finite. It is real because it is God's creation, it is finite because it is not itself God. Even a casual survey of the course of the evolution of the universe will show that the universe is real, although finite. Gandhi tries to gather the results of the studies and researches of different sciences and comes to find that there is a Law governing every movement and every development in every part of the universe. "All things in the universe including the sun and the moon and the stars obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws the world would not go on for a single moment." Gandhi perceives in the inexorable laws of nature nothing but the force or the will which maintains the world in harmony and order, and saves it from destruction. This force for him is nothing but God: and the laws are nothing but the ways of the working of that force. That gives to the world its reality. This is also apparent from the consideration of the fact, which is more or less, confirmed by the sciences, that there is a continuity among the various forms of life and existence. Sciences have shown that the world exhibits a gradual progress—a continuous process of growth. What is the end towards which this onward march of Nature is progressing? It can be nothing else but 'God himself who is the perfect and the ultimate ideal of everything. Thus, God is the beginning of the world and also its end. This gives to the world its reality. This emphasis on the reality of the world has a practical implication also. If the world has a reality, then it is suicidal to

deny the reality of anything. Gandhi would never favour a denial of the will to live, on the other hand, in accordance with his conviction he recommends a return to Nature. Nature does not merely appear to him as full of poetic charms, he also perceives in it a field for action. Gandhi feels that Nature provides to man a 'Karma-sthala' -a field for action, where man can discipline his soul by leading a religious and moral life. That is the reason why Gandhi, at times, talks of the beauties of Nature-of the solemn silence of forests and hills and of the majesty of the snow-clad Himalayas and at other times, he recommends an actual return to nature just to derive benefits of the actual healing power of Nature. His deep love for Naturopathy, his recommendations to take plenty of air and water and to walk barefooted are some of the evidences of his love for Nature.

Even so, the world is finite. It is finite because 'it is not infinite and it is not infinite because there cannot be two infinities. That the world is finite is shown to be a fact by referring to the forces of destruction and disharmony present in the universe.

Gandhi is not blind to the discordant notes evident in the world. The presence of such elements does not negate the reality of the world but merely proves its finitude and limitedness. Neither Nature nor man is free from imperfection, and so, what is required is an attempt to transcend this finitude and imperfection.

3.4 NATURE OF MAN

In the history of philosophy, there have been many thinkers who have given thought and attention to the question regarding the nature and the status of man. Some of these thoughts are influenced by Psychology and some of them are expressions of metaphysical insight. Freud and the Freudians, for example, try to paint a complete picture of man on the basis of their analysis of unconscious urges and impulses. Some other psychologists, taking their clue from these thinkers, seek to reduce man to some original and native impulses, desires and emotions. Then, there are thinkers like Hobbes who seek to determine man in terms of a social drive of a self-centered nature. Man basically is conceived as a selfish individual,

who, for the sake of his own pleasure, feels the need of making adjustments with others, and consequently enters upon, what can be called, a social contract. Then, there are certain sociologists who try to explain the nature of man entirely in terms of social conditions. According to them man is essentially and basically a social creature; apart from society he cannot even exist. These people, therefore, emphasize the importance of social factors and seek to reduce man entirely to his social conditions. Then, there are some metaphysicians who believe that explaining the nature of man means discovering the common and essential characters of man. Aristotle, for example, describes man as a rational animal suggesting that this description represents the characters that every man necessarily shares with every other man. Then again, there are some Humanists and Existentialists who appear to be convinced that the description of man in terms of his class-characters cannot be an exact description of man for the simple reason that in the case of man his peculiarities are by far more important than the common characters. Every individual man is unique in his own way, and as such, possesses certain characters that are peculiar to him alone. According to the Existentialists, in particular, no description of man can be adequate unless it gives due regard to the peculiarities of man. Thus, these have been some of the prominent conceptions about the nature of man in history of thought.

But, Gandhi would say that these pictures of man are superficial and partial because they do not emphasize the basic truth about man. It would appear to Gandhi that these pictures of man, are in fact, pictures of the apparent man only. Gandhi feels that all such accounts of man are based on partial or superficial analysis of man's external behavior and conduct. It does not mean that the bodily aspects of man do not have any reality or that the apparent picture of man is essentially a false picture. Gandhi is aware of the importance and value of this aspect of man, but he believes that there is another aspect of man which is much more basic, which gives nourishment even to the bodily aspect and which is, more or less, neglected or forgotten by all psychological or psychoanalytic or sociological theories about human nature. This, according to Gandhi, represents the true nature of man.

Gandhi feels that man is a complex being. The bodily man is the apparent man, his body is natural in so far as it is akin to other objects of nature. The body grows and decays according to the laws of Nature, But, this aspect of man represents merely the physical aspect. Man is not merely a physical being. He has many other characters which are not just physical. He has consciousness, reason, conscience; will, emotion and similar other qualities. He has an aesthetic sense, a feeling-sensibility, and an insight into the nature of good and bad. These are not just physical activities, these are all expressions of the real man-of the spirit or soul present in him.

In fact, Gandhi's conception of the nature of man is based on his metaphysical conviction. Gandhi, metaphysically speaking, is a monist, he believes in the reality of one Supreme God. As such, he has to believe that whatever we come across is an expression of the one God. Man, therefore, is also an expression of that one reality. Thus, both the bodily and the spiritual aspects of man are expressions of God, even so, Gandhi feels that the spiritual aspect of man represents man's superior and true nature simply because it is akin to Divine nature.

Gandhi accepts that every individual is a mixture of the bodily and the spiritual. He also believes that initially the bodily and the physical aspects were more predominant and that the spiritual went on becoming more and more prominent as the evolutionary process progressed. Evolution, according to him, is a change from the physical to the spiritual, aiming ultimately at the complete realization of spirituality, that is, Divinity. This also bows that in spite of the fact that the bodily aspect of man also has its own importance and value man's essential nature consists in his spirituality.

Thus, it is apparent that there is an element of Divinity present in every man. This is expressed in various ways. The presence of reason, conscience, free-will etc. is an evidence of the presence of this element in man. Gandhi asserts that if these Divine elements are used in the right manner, man can bring heaven on this earth.

In fact, the most illuminating description of this aspect of man that Gandhi very frequently gives is that it is the aspect of the essential goodness present in every man. Although outwardly man appears to be selfish and

even brutish, inwardly and essentially he is good. He says, 'I refuse to suspect human nature. It will, is bound to, respond to any noble and friendly action.' In the application of the method of Non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. This is possible only because of the essential presence of such an element in man that is responsive to spiritual stimulation an element which is itself spiritual.

This belief in the essential spirituality and goodness of every man leads Gandhi to believe further in the essential unity of mankind. He says, 'I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity... though we have many bodies, we have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction, but they have the same source. This unity is expressed both in the life of an individual and in social life. The spiritual law is constantly working behind all kinds of activities, individual, social, economic and political, and is, in fact, running through and unifying them all. He dearly says, "I believe in advaita. I believe in the essential unity of man, and for that matter of all that lives.

Gandhi believes in rebirth also. This belief is obviously a product of his extreme respect for Hindu beliefs and tradition, But, there is a significant sense in which Gandhi's faith in the possibility of rebirth carries the distinctive mark of his own personality and genius in Hinduism rebirth is, more or less, a metaphysical doctrine, a belief postulated for explaining mysteries of life prior to birth and after death. While Gandhi is not going to deny this, he does not feel the need of entering into the details and subtleties that the concept of rebirth involves. On the other hand, he gives a moral interpretation to this doctrine by emphasising the pragmatic and ethical value of this belief. He feels that by believing in the possibility of rebirth one is able to make adjustments with life. This belief enables man to be loving, kind, moral and benevolent even in the midst of his bitter experiences of jealousy, hatred and strife. It is true that life is not a bed of roses. It involves strife, struggle, hardship and consequently suffering. Most often an individual tends to break down in the face of all this. But, a belief in rebirth opens out before him new vistas and new possibilities. He comes to

realize that this world is not the end of everything and that acts done in this life have implications for future lives also. Evil and suffering experienced in this life are not final, this realization enables man to face this life with strength and in a dignified manner. Belief in the possibility of rebirth, therefore, becomes a condition for a pious, moral and noble living.

A belief in rebirth goes side by side with a belief in Karma. Hindu thought has given tremendous importance to the doctrine of Karma. It is taken to be both a metaphysical and a moral law. Metaphysically speaking, this law explains births and formation of bodies. Our present life and body are on account of our past Karmas. It is believed that our Karmas create tendencies in accordance with which our subsequent bodies and capacities are built. The Law of Karma is also conceived as a moral law. It is considered to be another name of the moral maxim 'as you sow so you reap'. The ancient Indian seers have suggested that man's bondage and suffering are due to his own wrong actions done in the past and that right and good deeds performed in this life will bear fruit in future and will enable man to make himself free and liberated.

Gandhi also has referred to both these aspects of Karma, he also describes the metaphysical status of man in terms of his Karmas, more or less, like a metaphysician. According to him, every individual is unique because of his peculiar physical and mental inheritance and equipment. What an individual now is, is the effect of his actions his habits of thinking, feeling, speaking and acting in the past. Man makes himself through all these diverse activities, internal and external. They appear to be so insignificant. separately, but taken together they create the tremendous forces that shape his health, character, and his entire destiny. But, for Gandhi, the moral significance of the Law of Karma appears to be more important because it is consistent with his moral convictions and also with his kind of faith in rebirth. The realization that one's own Karmas determine the future nature and status of an individual creates the further realization that it is man himself who is the maker of his own destiny. Now, it is for an individual to consider whether by his own acts he is going to make himself a good man or an immoral man. Gandhi thinks that such a

realization will create a sense of responsibility in man. He will now know that it is almost obligatory for him to raise himself by himself' so that he can fully express and realize the Divinity latent in him.

3.5 NON-VIOLENCE (AHIMSA)

An account of Gandhi's theory of Truth necessarily takes us to the consideration of his views on the nature of Non-violence. Gandhi himself says, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could. In doing so I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence. In fact it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered nonviolence. Explaining more clearly the transition from the notion of Truth to that of Non-violence he says, "Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which the reverse? Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later."

Let us first try to determine the Gandhian sense of the word Ahimsa. Not that Gandhi is using this word in some special sense which is entirely different from its traditional or customary sense, but, Gandhi has emphasised certain aspects of Ahimsa which have not been given that importance by any other believer in Ahimsa. On account of such emphasis there has emerged a Gandhian sense of the word, which, although similar to its usual sense, has some distinctive features of its own.

In Gandhi the word Ahimsa has both a negative and a positive import. The positive aspect of its meaning is more fundamental for Gandhi, because it comprehends the negative aspect also and represents its essence.

The usual meaning of Ahimsa is non-killing. Most often its meaning is made broader by emphasising that non-killing is merely one example of

Ahimsa. Ahimsa then, is conceived as non-injury. In any case, Ahimsa is conceived as the opposite of himsa. Gandhi accepts this and adds much more to its content. He also accepts that himsa means causing pain or killing any life out of anger, or from a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it. Refraining from doing all this is Ahimsa. In fact in conceiving Ahimsa thus Gandhi seems to be influenced by Jainism which recommends the practice of Ahimsa in thought, speech and action. According to it, even thinking ill of others is himsa. Not only this, Jainism demands that one should not only commit himsa himself, he should not cause himsa or permit himsa to take place. Gandhi's negative requirements of Ahimsa are not as rigid as that, because Gandhi is aware that it is not possible to observe non-violence in as strict and rigid manner as Jainism demands. He is aware that in certain cases himsa is unavoidable, as for example, in the processes of eating, drinking, walking, breathing etc. It is impossible to sustain one's body without injuring other bodies to some extent. Gandhi in fact, openly recommends killing under certain circumstances.

He says, "Taking life may be a duty. We do destroy as much life as we think necessary for sustaining our body. Thus, for food we take life, vegetable and other, and for health we destroy mosquitoes and the like by the use of disinfectants etc., and we do not think that we are guilty of irreligion in doing so for the benefit of the species we kill carnivorous beasts even man -slaughter may be necessary in certain cases. Suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, and killing anyone that comes in his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Anyone who despatches this lunatic, will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded as a benevolent man, He makes this point still clearer when he says, "I see that there is an instinctive horror of killing living beings under any circumstances whatever. For instance, an alternative has been suggested in the shape of confining even rabid dogs in a certain place and allow them to die a slow death. Now my idea of compassion makes this thing impossible for me. I can not for a moment bear to see a dog or for that matter any other living being, helplessly suffering the torture of a slow death. I do not kill a human being thus circumstanced because I have more

hopeful remedies. I should kill a dog similarly situated, because in its case, I am without a remedy. Should my child be attacked with rabbies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony, I should consider it my duty to take his life. Fatalism has its limits. We leave things to Fate after exhausting all the remedies. One of the remedies and the final one to relieve the agony of a tortured child is to take his life. Thus, it is apparent that Gandhi considers it almost a virtue to take life under certain conditions. In fact, he feels that under conditions similar to the examples given by him, continuing to live itself is pain and that, therefore, non-killing amounts to prolonging pain and agony. Thus, Non-injury itself has been conceived in a slightly different manner by Gandhi.

He is of the opinion that killing or injury to life can be an act of violence only under certain conditions. These conditions are anger, pride, hatred, selfish consideration, bad intention and similar other considerations. Any injury to life done under these motives is himsa. Thus, the negative meaning of Ahimsa is non-killing or non-injury' but this presupposes that nonviolent act is free from hatred, anger, malice and the like.

But, for Gandhi, the positive aspects of Ahimsa are much more basic than its negative characters. - Ahimsa is not merely refraining from causing injurie\$ to creature, it stands for certain positive attitudes towards other living beings that one must cultivate.

In working out the positive principles of Ahimsa Gandhi proceeds under a basic conviction, namely that Ahimsa represents one of the basic and essential qualities of mankind. That does not mean that violence does not have any place in life. In fact, even in preserving one's existence one has to commit himsa of one kind or the other, and yet Ahimsa is considered to be the law of our species. This is apparent from the fact that even when violence appears to do some good, the good that results is very temporary. Nothing permanent can be built on violence. History teaches us that those who have, even with sincere and honest motives, ousted the greedy and the dishonest by using brute force against them, have, in their turn, become a prey to those very evil things with which the dishonest persons had suffered.

This particular belief of Gandhi is expressed in his oft-quoted assertion that Ahimsa is natural to man. He illustrates this in various ways. If we survey the course of evolution we shall find that although in the initial stages brute force appeared to be dominant, the progress of evolution is towards Ahimsa. In fact, in the case of every species it can be seen that no animal or creature eats or devours or destroys its own offsprings. In the case of man, in particular, this fact is still more evident. Man is both body and spirit. Body can represent physical power and therefore can, on occasions, do himsa; but man's true nature consists in his spiritual aspects. Man as spirit is essentially nonviolent. A simple evidence of this is the fact that while body or the senses can be injured, the soul can never be injured. Himsa, therefore, is alien to man's nature. The moment the spiritual side of man is awakened, his non-violent nature becomes apparent. In fact, in its positive aspect Ahimsa is nothing but Love. Love is a kind of feeling of oneness. In an act of love one identifies himself with the object of his love, and this cannot be possible unless there is an effort to free mind from every such disposition that prevents the spontaneous outflow of Love.

Therefore, Ahimsa demands a sincere effort to free mind from feelings like anger, malice, hatred, revenge, jealousy etc., because these create obstacles in the way of Love. Love, according to Gandhi, is the 'energy that cleanses one's inner life and uplifts him, and as such, love comprehends such noble feelings as benevolence, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, generosity, kindness, sympathy etc.

To love, of course, is a very difficult discipline. It is easy to hate, but it requires supreme energy and strength to love. The task becomes still more difficult when one is required to love a person who is ordinarily to be regarded as an opponent. Therefore, Gandhi says that non-violence is meant for the strong and not for the weak. This can be demonstrated in a very simple manner. Gandhi believes that violence is essentially an expression of weakness. One who is inwardly weak develops a sort of a fear and -out of fear starts arming himself against real or imaginary enemies. Violence may have the appearance of strength, but it is born out of fear and is, therefore, a sign of weakness. Only he can be truly non-violent who has conquered fear.

The capacity to kill is not a sign of strength, the strength to die is the real strength. Only when one has this strength in him that he can claim to have risen above fear and is able to Practice non-violence. "A helpless mouse is not non-violent because he is always eaten by the pussy. He would gladly eat the murderer if he could. In fact, "Non-violence pre-supposes the ability to strike." One who is practicing Ahimsa has the strength to overpower his adversary, and still he Practice: ahimsa because ahimsa is a conscious and deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. In fact, the really strong wins not by brute force, but by fearless love. "Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. It means pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire."

Non-violence again is conceived as a gospel of action. It is not an attitude of indifference or passivity. It is true that the seeds of non-violence the deep down in the heart, but they are expressed and given shape in actions. Therefore, Non-violence is a dynamic process involving continuous and persistent, deliberations, efforts, strains and actions. It is true that non-violence requires extreme patience on the part of one who is using this method, but this patience is not a sign of inactivity, it is an expression of a conscious and inner effort to force the so called opponent to see and realize his own mistake.

This is why it is said that non-violence involves sacrifice and suffering. Sacrifice, according to Gandhi, is an indispensable companion of Love. Love demands a going beyond, a self-transcendence. Only he can love who is selfless, who only believes in "giving" and not in taking. Gandhi says, "Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges it elf." This is self-sacrifice and this involves suffering. "The test of love is tapasya and tapasya is self-suffering." Gandhi feels that suffering is the surest way of getting victory in the battles of life. If we quietly suffer we give time to the opponent for his anger to calm down. He will then come to realize his mistake. Of course one presupposition of conscious suffering is that there must be a 'love' for even the opponent and

also a faith in the essential goodness present in him. Without this suffering would be in vain. This is why suffering is conceived as an aspect of Love. The essence of love, according to Gandhi is not enjoyment, it is suffering.

Gandhi also feels that non-violence conceived as love and conscious suffering can give full protection to one's self-respect and sense of honor. In fact, the non-violent man does not bend, it is the opponent who has to bend. He, in fact, practices forgiveness in the maximum degree, and in the process the opponent is almost put to shame.

It is the firm conviction of Gandhi that Ahimsa can be practiced universally. It is a power which can be wielded equally by all-children, young men and women or grown up people of all places and times. It does not involve the use of any external object, it only demands a sincerity of purpose and a purity of intentions, and as such, it can be practiced by everybody even by societies or nations.

But there is one supreme condition attached to the practice of Ahimsa. It cannot be practiced unless one has a living and unflinching faith in God. The practice of Ahimsa requires an inner strength, which can only be generated by a living-faith in God. A sincere faith in God will make man see that all human beings are fellow-beings and essentially one. Thus, the love of God would turn into a love of humanity, which alone can make possible the practice of Ahimsa. It is as a result of the realization of the unity of mankind that one will be able to love his fellow-beings. Faith in God, therefore, is the most fundamental condition for the practice of Ahimsa.

3.5.1 The Technique Of Ahimsa-Satyagraha

Gandhi is aware that a theoretical emphasis on the value and importance; of Truth and Non-violence would lead us nowhere unless a way is shown for the practice of Ahimsa. That takes him to develop a technique of Ahimsa, to which he gives the name of Satyagraha, which is translated in English as Truth-force, or even, at times, as Soul-force or Love-force, Gandhi, throughout his life went on making newer and newer experiments with this technique and thus succeeded in giving to it some definite shape. In order to be able to appreciate its nature it would be better to begin with the description of this technique in Gandhi's own words. Describing the nature

of Satyagraha Gandhi says, "Its equivalent in the vernacular rendered into English means Truth Force. I think Tolstoy called it also Soul-Force, or Love-Force and so it is carried out to its utmost limit, this force is independent of pecuniary or other material assistance, even in its elementary form of physical force or violence. Indeed, violence is the negation of this great spiritual force which can only be wielded or cultivated by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force, to be used only by the weak, so long they are not capable of meeting violence by violence. This superstition arises from the incompleteness of the English expression [Passive Resistance]. It is impossible for those who consider themselves to be weak to apply this force. Only those who realize that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him, and that the latter always yields to it, can effectively be passive resisters. This force is to violence and, therefore, to all tyranny, all injustice what light is to darkness". An attempt to explain clearly the ideas contained in this lengthy passage taken from the writings of Gandhi will bring to light the salient features of Satyagraha.

One thing seems to be obvious, and it follows from the very etymology of the word Satyagraha. Truth according to Gandhi, is God, and Satyagraha is 'agraha' of 'Satya' and thus, it means holding fast to truth. It, therefore, demands a deep sincerity and a vigorous love for Truth. It works on the conviction that Truth represents the will and the ways of God. Therefore, the path of Truth has to be followed in a vigorous manner for no other consideration except the fact that it is God's way that it is the way of Truth. In this sense the doctrine of satyagraha is strictly rigoristic.

This means that Satyagraha is essentially based on love. In fact, Satyagraha appears to Gandhi almost as a religious pursuit. It rests on a religious belief that there is one God behind everything and being, and as such the same God resides in every one of us. This is the basis of Love, and

unless one has this basic love for mankind he cannot Practice the technique of Satyagraha.

There is yet another religious presupposition of Satyagraha. In fact, all rigoristic ethical doctrines, somehow or other, believe that there has to be another life, otherwise, they would not be able to explain the strictly rigoristic character of their belief. Gandhi also feels that a belief in rebirth is almost a pre-condition of Satyagraha. Satyagraha demands selfless and sincere pursuit of Truth without having any consideration of any advantage or gain, But, one will be able 'to walk on such a sharp ··razor's edge' only if he somehow believes that he will get the fruits of his good work, if not in this life, in subsequent life. He says, “with the knowledge that the soul survives the body, he [the satyagrahi] is not impatient to see the triumph of truth in the present body.”

Gandhi describes Satyagraha as a force against violence, tyranny and injustice. All these evils arise on account of a neglect of the 'truth' that is all pervasive and all-comprehending. Therefore, Gandhi says that if we start resisting evil with evil, violence with violence, anger with anger, then we are only adding fuel to fire. The most effective force against these evils can be the one, which would force them to evaporate, and that can be done only by Satyagraha.

This is possible only because satyagraha creates conditions for the anger of the opponent to spend itself out. It gives to the opponent a chance to see and realize his mistake and thereby to mend his ways. It is based on the conviction that there is an element of essential goodness in every man because man contains divinity within himself. Evils result because this element is either pushed to the background, or is clouded by passion, hatred and anger. What is, therefore, required is to awaken this aspect of man. The moment this element of goodness is aroused, the individual· himself will realize the wrong that he had been doing.

The Satyagrahi can do this by subjecting himself to suffering for the sake of Truth. Ahimsa is conscious suffering. The Satyagrahi, therefore, suffers and thereby converts the opponent. Gandhi says, “Nations, like individuals, are built through the agony of the cross and in no other way.

Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others, but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself.”

That is why Satyagraha has been described as a method of conversion rather than a method of coercion. Coercion implies violence, it may not be physical violence, but it is at least mental violence. The aim of satyagraha is not to embarrass the wrong doer. It does not appeal to fear, it does not proceed in terms of threats. It appeals to the heart and to the good sense of the wrong-doer. Its intention is to bring about, what Gandhi calls, a change of heart. In fact, satyagraha is based on the pre-supposition that there are no enemies or opponents, but that there are only wrong-doers. A wrong-doer will also develop some kind of a resistance if he is physically forced to be otherwise, but if he is made to see and realize the wrong, he will himself repent and change.

Therefore, Satyagraha is based on love. There must be love even for the opponent. Distrust or hatred of any kind will prevent the success of Satyagraha. There must be a 'trust' in the goodness of the opponent and a love based on the realization that he is also one of us. Gandhi goes on to add that there must also be a respect for the opponent. Satyagraha seeks to persuade the wrong-doer to give up his wrong, and this can be done very effectively when the wrong-doer is also approached with love and respect.

Satyagraha also demands extreme patience on the part of the satyagrahi. A wrong-doer cannot see his wrong at once, he will take time to win over his anger and hatred. The Satyagrahi must wait patiently for the good sense of the wrong-doer to be aroused.

Gandhi distinguishes Satyagraha from Passive Resistance with which it is usually confused. Firstly, Satyagraha is not a passive state; in fact, it is more active than violence. Secondly in passive resistance, there is an element of force, it does not completely forbid the use of violence. In fact, in it there remains the scope for the use of arms on particular occasions. In Satyagraha, on the other hand, violence is completely forbidden even in the face of very adverse situation. Thirdly, “In passive resistance there is always present an idea of harassing the other party and there is a simultaneous readiness to undergo any hardship entailed upon us by such activity, while in

Satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha, postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person. Fourthly, in passive resistance laws are disobeyed and as such the impression is created that passive resisters do not have respect for law. In Satyagraha, on the other hand, there is invariably a very great respect for the higher Law the Law of Truth and God. In fact, the entire process of Satyagraha is initiated by such a respect. Fifthly, while there is no scope for love in passive resistance, hatred has no place in Satyagraha, but is a positive breach of its principle and function. Passive resistance is based on a feeling of dislike (if not of complete hatred) for the opposite party. Satyagraha is based on a feeling of love. Sixthly, Passive resistance tends to compel the other party to do a thing, there is an element of coercion in it. It does not seek to change men's; heart. The Satyagrahi essentially appeals to the mind and heart of men with the sole aim of bringing about a conversion. The essence of Satyagraha is to liquidate antagonism, not the antagonist.

Thus, Satyagraha is based on the conviction that through love, ahimsa and conscious suffering the forces of evil can be neutralized, because this is the Divine way, the way of Truth. Gandhi believes that this technique is universal in its application. It can be Practiced by children and adults, by men and women, by individuals and communities and by societies and nations. It can be put to use on all possible fronts-in domestic life, in social relationship or in political situations. Its universality is derived from the fact that it is the way of God.

3.5.2 Requirements Of A Satyagrahi

But, Gandhi is aware that although it is possible for everybody to use this technique, it cannot be followed in a loose or casual or insincere manner. It requires a very strict moral and religious discipline, Gandhi has, in course of his numerous references to this subject, mentioned a number of qualities and characters which a Satyagrahi must possess. Some of the basic ones can be enumerated and emphasised here.

1. A Satyagrahi must be basically honest and sincere. It implies honesty of purpose and sincerity of effort. Without this a Satyagraha will remain satyagraha merely in name.

Notes

2. A Satyagrahi must not have any mental reservations, he must be open-minded. Gandhi feels that a change of heart can be brought about only when the other party, is approached open-mindedly, with no 'second' or hidden' ideas or motives.
3. A Satyagrahi must be a disciplined soldier. Truth alone should be his master and conscience his guide. He should be loving, but firm.
4. This means that a Satyagrahi must be completely fearless. He must not fear anything worldly even death. Gandhi says that one who has not conquered fear cannot follow the way of Satyagraha effectively.
5. Fearlessness leads to another virtue, sacrifice. A Satyagrahi must be prepared for the greatest possible sacrifice. He has to be completely selfless, and no sacrifice is great for him. He must be prepared to undergo any amount of suffering for the sake of Truth and for the good of others.
6. Suffering and Sacrifice have to be undergone in an attitude of simplicity and humility. If a Satyagrahi becomes arrogant and starts feeling that he is doing something great, his satyagraha would go in vain. Humility, according to Gandhi, is one of the prime virtues of a Satyagrahi.
7. Gandhi asserts that a Satyagrahi is required to Practice truthfulness and non-violence not only in his actions, but also in thought and speech. He admits that this is not possible all at once, but asserts that constant discipline and sincere effort would be of great help.
8. A Satyagrahi must be firm in his dealings and behaviour. He must not yield to pressure, he must not give way to greed and dishonest persuasions. He must have a strength of character and a resoluteness of will. Honesty and Integrity 'must be his ideal.
9. There must be a conformity between the thought and action of a Satyagrahi. Gandhi knows that the absence of this character gives rise to many kinds of evils. Moreover, it reflects the disintegrated and disorganised character of the person concerned. A Satyagrahi has to win the confidence and love of the adversary, and therefore there

- must be a co-ordination between what he thinks and says and what he does.
10. Gandhi also recommends that the Satyagrahi must learn to put on restraints upon his own self. He gives practical tips and hints for such practices. One of the effective suggestion in this regard is the practice of Fasting.
 11. He also recommends the cultivation of some of the essential virtues of life. The virtues most often mentioned are the ones that ancient Indian philosophy has emphasised-viz. Asteya (Non stealing), Aparigraha (Contentment), Brahmacharya (Celibacy) etc.
 12. The Satyagrahi must also have tolerance in him. Gandhi is not happy with this word, but for want of a better word he uses it. He says that a Satyagrahi has always to deal with adversaries. If he does not have tolerance, he will lose self-control, and thus, will upset the way of Love.
 13. The Satyagrahi is also required to observe other ordinary virtues of life like punctuality and order. These, according to Gandhi, are forms of Discipline that help in the cultivation of the power of self-control.
 14. The most fundamental requirement is that a Satyagrahi must have a living faith in God. In fact, the entire principle of Satyagraha is based on the conviction that there is one God and also on the faith that there is an element of Divinity present in everyman. A faith in God, therefore, is the religious pre-requisite of the life of a Satyagrahi.

Gandhi feels that a true Satyagrahi who has been able to fulfil the requirement mentioned above can work wonders. He alone can face the might of an army or even of an empire. Great powers also would bend before the Truth-force of a single Satyagraha. Describing vividly his own idea of how Satyagraha can meet a violent army in a non-violent manner, Gandhi says, "At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer the question in the only manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there are two ways common between soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence,

and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and a president of the federal state what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by re-enacting a. Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children inviting the invaders to walk over your corpses. Imagine these men and women staying in front of an army requiring a safe passage to another country. The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say that you will still have done your duty by allowing yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women, would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you wish, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women; but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon- of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

3.5.3 Kinds Of Satyagraha

Although Gandhi believes that Satyagraha is one simple technique which can be used differently in different situations, in actual practice it has assumed different forms. Therefore, the impression is created that there are many kinds of Satyagraha.

Some of the prominent kinds of Satyagraha that have been used not only by Gandhi or his followers but also by believers in other kinds of theory (viz. the communists) are the following:

1. Negotiation
2. Arbitration
3. Agitation and Demonstration
4. Economic Boycott
5. Non-cooperation
6. Civil Disobedience
7. Direct Action
5. Fasting

To this list are also added some other measures that have become popular in course of time:

9. Strike
10. Picketing
11. Dharna
12. Non-payment of Taxes.

etc.

All these are riot favored equally by Gandhi. In fact, some of these are even condemned by him. He is aware of the possible perversions of the way of

Satyagraha. He says, “Indiscriminate resistance to authority must lead to lawlessness, unbridled license and consequent self-destruction.” He knows that all these methods would fail if the intention is not pure and if these are not taken resort to in a spirit of love. Therefore, he recommends that a Satyagrahi must first exhaust all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha. He must constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he must appeal to public opinion, educate it, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues that he should resort to Satyagraha. People, at times, just to get quick returns take resort to some of the forms of Satyagraha. Gandhi is completely against this. Explaining this by taking the example of non-payment of taxes he says that this may produce quickest possible results. But, he feels that we must not resort to non-payment of taxes because of the possibility of a ready response. The readiness of this kind, according to him, is a fatal temptation. Such non-payment will not be civil or non-violent, but it will be criminal and fraught with the greatest possibility of violence. Likewise, ridiculing the present form of Dharna' he says, some students have revived the ancient form of barbarity in the form of sitting dharna. I call it barbarity because it is a crude way of using coercion. It is also cowardly because one who sits dharna knows that he is not going to be trampled over. It is difficult to call the practice violence, but it is certainly worse. If we fight our opponent, we at least enable him to return the blow. But when we challenge him to walk over us, we are knowing that he will not, place him in a most awkward and humiliating position.” Even with respect to Non-co-operation he says that extreme caution is necessary in resorting to it. Non-co-operation, when its limitations are not recognized, becomes a license instead of becoming a duty and therefore becomes a crime.” In such cases, Satyagraha; according to Gandhi, becomes Duragraha. In fact, the moral and religious requirements of Satyagraha are very strict and rigorous, any deviation would distort the whole process. It has to be based on sincerity of purpose and on an essential love for the other party. Of course Gandhi concedes that the use and application of the technique of Satyagraha would vary from person to person. He accepts Satyagraha as a universal principle,

but admits the practical limitations of its complete operation. But, he lays down a fundamental and essential condition for its use: that is the recognition of the existence of a soul of a good nature in every man. This recognition must not only be a kind of an intellectual understanding, it must be a living faith on which our life and conduct can unhesitatingly be based. The forms of Satyagraha that Gandhi seems to favour most are Disobedience, Non-co-operation, Direct Action and Fasting. Disobedience is considered to be a protest against unjust laws. Gandhi, in this regard, seems to be influenced by Thoreau and accordingly feels that it is morally proper to be right and true than to be law-abiding. He resorted to this technique chiefly in South Africa when he protested against the unjust, discriminatory and racial laws: Non-co-operation, according to Gandhi, is essentially a cleansing process, it affects the Satyagrahi more than the other party and is able to give to the Satyagrahi a power to face evil and to endure suffering. Non-co-operation, as Gandhi conceives it, amounts to a kind of a refusal on the part of the exploited to be exploited. Gandhi feels that the exploited is also to be blamed for being exploited because he has allowed himself to be exploited. Non-co-operation, therefore, is refusal on the part of the exploited to succumb to the forces of exploitation. 'Swadeshi' is an example of this kind of Satyagraha. Direct Action is conceived as an open and mass rebellion. Although the word rebellion has associations with violent ways, 'Direct Action' is essentially non-violent. It is also open in the sense that there is no secret about it. The QUIT INDIA call given by Gandhi in 1942 was an example of this kind of Satyagraha. But, the most effective form of Satyagraha, according to Gandhi, is fasting. Fasting works in a double way, it aims at self-purification and also by honestly choosing the way of death it can mend even the obstinacy of the other party. But, Gandhi feels that this should be treated as the last weapon of the Satyagrahi and should be resorted to only at the last moment only when other means of persuasion have failed. Fasting concentrates the energy of the soul and forces the opponent to see reason. He says, "It is my firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh." He further says, "My

religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray

To find a solution of this problem it is essential to enter into the thought-system of Gandhi. Gandhi was aware of the difficulty, and therefore, he very often tried to make his standpoint clear. He says, "In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God.

But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe-and I think it is the truth-that God has as many names as there are creatures and therefore, we also say that God is nameless, and since God has many forms we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us in many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on if it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description, I have come to the conclusion that for myself God is Truth.

An interpretation of this passage will bring to light the reasons for Gandhi's saying that God is Truth. Firstly, this assertion is the result of a search for a name or a category for the universal reality, that is God, which appears to defy all description. Secondly, God is described as Truth because God alone is real. Truth, according to Gandhi, is not an attribute of God, but God Is Truth. Truth, according to him, is derived from the word 'sat', and 'sat' means 'Is'. And so, by calling God Truth, what is being asserted is that God alone is.

But later on, Gandhi, instead of asserting the previous statement God is Truth', came to assert the statement. 'Truth is God'. Normally, such conversion presents logical difficulties. From the statement all men are mortal, we cannot pass over to the statement all mortals are men. Such difficulties are practically removed when the subject and the predicate are identified with each other. Therefore, one can say that there is nothing peculiar or extraordinary in shifting the emphasis from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God'. But, Gandhi's reasons for bringing about this change are not as simple as that. He says, "But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be God, God is Truth above all....But two years ago I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between

the two statements, viz. that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to the conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth:

This shows that there is a very strong reason for bringing about this change. One reason for this change is that the word Truth is not as ambiguous as the word God. Nobody understands exactly the same thing by the word 'God', God may be pantheistic, theistic, polytheistic, or even deistic. But, the word Truth' is always clear in its significance. Again; there is yet another, a more fundamental reason, for suggesting this change. Gandhi is able to realize that it is possible to rationally doubt-even to, deny-the existence of God, but that it is self-contradictory to attempt to deny Truth. Reason can raise arguments against the possibility of God's - existence, but reason cannot reject Truth. There have been many sceptics and nonbelievers in the world, but even they cannot deny truth. In fact, Truth provides a common platform to both the theist and the atheist. Truth is the only factor which is completely universal and comprehensive. Gandhi says that an atheist would resent strongly if he is described as a God-fearing man, but he would gladly accept his own description as a 'Truth-fearing' man. This, more than anything else, leads Gandhi to assert the primacy of Truth. Blind religious notions about God have done immense damage to mankind, and therefore, the emphasis has to shift from God to truth. He says, 'I don't care for God if He is anything but Truth.'

What is Truth? In the logical sense of the word 'Truth', truth is considered to be a property of judgment, but, in the meta physical context Truth is conceived differently it is conceived as right knowledge, as knowledge that corresponds to reality. In Indian metaphysics, at times, Truth is conceived as self-illuminating as revealing itself. Gandhi somehow combines all these meanings of the word. Truth' and then comes to identify Truth with God. In fact, in doing so he relies on, what can be called, the popular meaning of the word 'truth'. Popularly a distinction between 'Sat' and 'Satya' is not made. Gandhi explicitly asserts that the word Satya' is derived from 'Sat', and this leads him to identify Satya with reality.

But, a student of philosophy may raise a doubt: how can the two be identified with each other? Truth is the picture of reality grasped by human

mind. How can the picture of reality be identical with reality itself? But, Gandhi seems to have solved this difficulty in his own peculiar way. The distinction between 'knowledge of an object', and 'the object of knowledge' is based on, what is known as, the Dualistic theory of knowledge. Now, there are many religious philosophers and intuitionists who reject this theory and come to assert that knowing is being. The influences that shaped Gandhi's thought -viz., The Upanisads, Christianity, thoughts of Tolstoy etc. had also similar ideas about knowledge. Naturally, Gandhi does not find any difficulty in identifying Truth with reality. Therefore, Gandhi says. 'My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth . . . the little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence.

There are certain interesting implications of Gandhi's assertion that Truth is God. These implications have both a pragmatic value and a religious value. One very significant implication of this assertion is that the object of worship is not God but Truth. This can very well become a basis for a really universal religion because worship of Truth' is one thing that can bring persons of every caste, creed and nation together.

In the initial stages of his experiments he was a firm believer in the intimacy of God, but, in course of time he came in association with many sincere and thoughtful persons who honestly believed that the traditional idea of God was open to criticisms on account of its being a defective notion. But, even their rejection of God was based on a sincere desire to know the Truth. Gandhi at once came to realize that reason could reject anything but not Truth. He could see that all religious believers of all kinds and even the atheists could be brought together under the banner of Truth. Truth appeared to him as the only force that could unify even conflicting ideas and ideals. That led him to say, "If it is at all possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, then we must say that God is Truth But I went a step further and said Truth is God. I never found a

double meaning in connection with truth, Hence the definition 'Truth is God' gives me greatest satisfaction.

This explains Gandhi's broad attitude and his assertion that a sincere love and worship of Truth will bring together Hindus, Muslims and even Marxists and Atheists. That is why Gandhi says that there are no atheists in the real sense of the term.

Critics of Gandhi often point out that Gandhi does not give due regard to 'reason' in formulating his ideas about God. The basis of such a criticism is the fact that Gandhi most often "talks about 'the inner voice' or 'the voice of the conscience'". This is also a fact that Gandhi appears to be convinced about the veracity of his beliefs simply on the testimony of his own inner voice. In fact, at times he even ridicules reason for all sorts of fantastic cobwebs that it keeps on weaving. Writing in the *Young India* he says, "Rationalists are admirable beings, but Rationalism can be a hideous monster when it claims omnipotence for itself. Attribution of omnipotence to Reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as the worship of stick and stone believing it to be God. I plead not for the suppression of reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies reason.

But, this only proves that Gandhi does not place the ultimate emphasis on rational demonstration of God's existence. He is convinced that God can be known only in a state of inner realization that God's knowledge can only be revealed to an individual in some sincere and sacred inner experience. Even so, at times, Gandhi does talk about evidences of God's existence. A student of philosophy who is acquainted with the traditional proofs for God's existence, can very well find elements of such proofs in Gandhi's writings. The causal argument for the existence of God makes its appearance, more or less, in the form of Descartes' Cosmological proof. Gandhi argues in the following manner: we exist, our parents have also existed, and the parents of our parents have also existed. This question can be extended further and further, and thus, it can very legitimately be asked, 'who originates the whole of creation?', who is the 'parent' of the whole universe? Gandhi feels that one can reasonably arrive at the concept of God in this way. God can be conceived as the parent' of the whole universe. This

process of arriving at the concept of God very well resembles the causal proof', which starts with the universe, seeks for its cause and arrives at the concept of God.

One can find traces of, what is called, the Teleological proof for God's existence, in the following kind of references that Gandhi frequently gives. At various places Gandhi talks of the order and the harmony of the universe. He also says that there is a Law governing the universe. Then he argues that the order, harmony and the Law cannot be explained unless an intelligent Law-giver is presupposed. If the cause is not a unity, we cannot find unity in the universe. He says, 'I subscribe to the belief or the philosophy that all life in its essence is one. This belief requires a living faith in a living God who is the ultimate arbiter of our fate.

But, the proof that appears to be most convincing to Gandhi is the Moral proof. In fact, Gandhi values this proof very much and very frequently makes a reference to this. He seems to be convinced that the voice of conscience carries a dependable testimony for God's existence. Conscience, according to him represents the Divine in man. It has an awareness of the good and the bad. It sanctions the good and condemns the bad. It creates an exalting feeling when the good is done and it pricks whenever a wrong step is taken. The peculiarity about this inner voice is that whenever it speaks it speaks with an authority. Its voice appears to be obligatory. One is constrained to feel that obedience of the dictates of this voice is one's duty. Now, for Gandhi there seems to be no other explanation of this call of conscience except the fact that it is a representative of a Being who is at once the embodiment of Supreme Goodness. He clearly says, "I have no special revelation of God's will. My firm belief is that He reveals himself daily to every human being but we shut our eyes to the still small voice.

Then, at times, a reference is made to a kind of proof that can be called "Pragmatic proof." Gandhi believes that a belief in God's existence is necessary because God satisfies a very important aspect of our life. If we survey our life we find that, over and above the wants and needs of everyday existence, we do have an urge of a different kind which cannot be satisfied

with the usual materialistic fulfilments of life, and which demands a spiritual satisfaction. We become keenly conscious of such an urge in the moments of anxiety and crisis, when we feel forsaken by all the worldly and materialistic ways of life. Then we clearly realize that we are in need of a supreme object of love, by having a faith in which, we can derive strength, solace, peace and even happiness. This supreme object of love is nothing but God. Therefore, Gandhi says, "He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and therefore in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love.

But, the fact remains that, according to Gandhi, proofs can not serve the function of producing a faith in the existence of God. Gandhi is aware that God can be felt through actual experience. He does not outline the condition or the nature of such an experience. At times, of course he does refer to moral sense and to moral experience; but that also is done not to outline the nature of experience, but to provide a way for testing one's religious faith. Thus, it is apparent that, according to Gandhi, God not only transcends senses, but also defies rational proofs. God is a matter of inner realization and faith.

Gandhi never misses an opportunity of trying to describe the characters of God. The characters mentioned by him are generally theistic, but they bear the mark of Gandhi's basic conviction, namely that 'Truth is God.'

Gandhi conceives God as all-pervasive. God is the reality in which everything lives and moves. In conceiving God in this manner Gandhi is almost identifying the metaphysical reality with the theistic God, and in the process, he is also identifying character of all-pervasiveness with that of omnipresence. He says, "There is an indefinable mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power that makes itself felt and yet defies proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses.

God is also, at times, described as Law. Although this description creates the impression that God is an impersonal principle, Gandhi rises above such an impression when he says that God's Law and God are not different from each other. God himself is the Law. To say that God rules everything means simply that his Law abides

1. Check your Progress

1. Kinds of Satyagraha

3.6 LETS SUM UP

Gandhi very often calls God 'Love'. The full implication of this description of God will be clear only when Gandhi's conception of Love and Ahimsa is fully grasped, but one thing seems to be fairly evident that there can be no other way of apprehending God than the way of Love. God is present in every one of us, and therefore, by a gradual process of extending love we can love everybody and thereby God himself. This kind of love demands a kind of a self-sacrifice—a sacrifice of the egoistic and selfish ways for the love and the good of others. Gandhi says, have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the external and to become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hands so that my service may become more certain because uninterrupted by the baser self in me.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Satya : Truth

Satyagraha: Seeker of Truth

Satyagrahi : One who follow Truth

3.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain Gandhi's views on Satyagraha.
2. Who is a true Satyagrahi.

3.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Answer to Check your Progress
 - 1 Negotiation
 - 2 Non-cooperation
 - 3 Arbitration
 - 4 Civil Disobedience
 - 5 Agitation and Demonstration
 - 6 Direct Action
 - 7 Economic Boycott
 - 8 Fasting

UNIT 4 GANDHI ON NATIONALISM

STRUCTURE

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 India as a nation

4.3 Assessment of the congress and the British political institutions and Practices

4.4 Self-rule: need to bridge the gap between the elite and the masses

4.5 Let's sum up

4.6 Key words

4.7 Questions for Review

4.8 Suggested Readings

4.9 Answer Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Gandhi's perception of India as a nation
- Gandhi's assessment of British political institutions and practices
- Gandhi's concept of self-rule and how it should bridge the gap between the elite and the masses

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The modern Indian political discourse, which begins with Rammohun Roy, had distinctively a social connotation which only transformed itself into a political one after the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. The philosophy of early Indian nationalism focused more on the social rather than on the political because of the deep social cleavages and the unevenness in which the modern notion like a nation looked far fetched. For instance, Rammohun talks of continued Indian subordination and freedom

from the British after 150 years. After Rammohun we find a larger assertion in the context of an assertion of an Indian identity, yet, like Surendranath Bannerjee, the general proposition was that India is not yet a nation but a nation in making. At this time, during the last quarter of the 19th century, there was a crystallisation of the philosophy of cultural nationalism manifested mainly in Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda. Dayananda talks of a glorious Indian past declaring the Vedas to be the epic source of knowledge for the whole of humankind but within this revivalist philosophy, he is also conscious of the degeneration and the need for reform and creation of a new Indian identity. In this formulation there is a reflection of a great deal of British impact when he characterises the British as being superior as they exude confidence in their dress, language and culture. Most importantly the British honour the idea of contract in their personal relations. In the context of contemporary India under colonial subjugation, he wants a cultural awakening and integration preaching equality as the core of the Indian tradition and propagating swadeshi and Hindustani as the lingua franca of the country. Dayananda's general argument is to prove the point that the Indians are in no way inferior to the British and within the framework of a revivalist past, it is quite possible to envisage a better future of India as a nation. Vivekananda, articulating another important dimension of a dialectical co-relationship, finds the western civilisation and the Indian civilisation being only partially complete because the West is deficient in spirituality whereas India lacks a tradition of modern education and scientific enquiry. By the time Gandhi entered the political arena in India via his long and fruitful experiments in truth in South Africa, the debate between the Moderates and the Extremists was virtually over and the debate over the primacy of the social or of the political was resolved. By this time, with the widespread influence of the reform movements and the nationalist struggle that had exerted on the Indian mind many of the European conceptions and articulations; these became an integral part of the nationalist discourse with the Mahatma becoming the representative and unifying force. He dismisses the idea that the attributes of a nation in India are of a recent origin and especially due to the imprint of British colonialism. Following the

spirit of earlier cultural nationalism, he traces back to the ancient Indian heritage to demonstrate that the idea of the Indian nation not only in its rudimentary form but also in the context of certain fulfilment existed much before either the idea of nationalism or the nation-state originated in the West. That the great places of pilgrimage spread all over India and the saints who, by their acts of sacrifice and perseverance, ceased to be local or regional and became national was an enough indication that India was a nation much before the British rule.

4.2 INDIA AS A NATION

Gandhi rejects the popular perception that ‘India has become a nation under the British rule’ and disputes the claim of those who argue that India is a nation after the British introduced western ideas and to the changes brought about by the modern means of communication such as the railways and the telegraph. This view, he dismisses, is the British interpretation of Indian history and points out in the *Hind Swaraj* (1909) “I hold this to be mistake. The English have taught us that we were not one nation before and that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without foundations. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that we were able to establish one kingdom. Subsequently, they divided us” (Gandhi’s claim that India is nation is based on two assumptions: the first is that ancient Indian civilisation has a capacity to accommodate diversity and plurality and the second is that in the ancient India, the acharyas, in establishing certain places of pilgrimage, laid the basis for the evolution of an all India consciousness. The Ancient civilisation of India was predominantly Hindu in character but it was open to non-Hindu values and ideas. Gandhi highlights the accommodative capacity of India to fuse new ideas and values with its ancient civilisation over several centuries. As for the second assertion, Gandhi points out that pilgrim centres like Haridwar in the North and Rameshwaram in the South and Jagannath in the East were established not merely for religious benefit but “to create and sustain a sense of common identity among Indians scattered over an

immense territory...they saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature. They, therefore, argued that it must be one nation. Arguing thus, they established holy places in various parts of India, and fired the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world". According to Gandhi, India's strength lies in the unity amidst its diversity. He acknowledges the existence of many languages and dialects and insists that all provincial languages of Sanskrit and Dravidian stock should be replaced by Devanagari. Until one script is formalized, Hindustani could be used as the lingua franca with the option of either Persian or Nagari characters and "when the hearts of two meet, the two forms of the same language will be fused together, and we shall have a resultant of the two, containing as many Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic or other words as may be necessary for its full growth and full expression". Writing about India as the home to many religions, Gandhi says "India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. The country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dream-land. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians, who have made India their country, are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religious synonymous terms, nor has it ever been so in India". To the question posed by the Reader in the Hind Swaraj as to whether the "introduction of Mahomedanism not unmade the nation? Indian civilization may have supplied a basis for a common identity in the pre-Islamic period; but now we have Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians. Our very proverbs prove it. The Muslims turn to the West for worship, and the Hindus to the East; the Muslims kill cows, the Hindus worship them. The Muslims do not believe in ahimsa, while the Hindus adhere to it. We thus

meet with differences at every stop. How can India be one nation?” Gandhi is aware of the factual differences between the Hindus and Muslims but does not consider these differences serious enough to prevent the emergence of composite nationalism. He does not see the presence of Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and Christians as a challenge to Indian civilization but as an opportunity to allow for accommodation. Furthermore, he also underlines that religion as a sect ought not be the basis of nationality: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation”. On the question of language Gandhi rejects the Macaulay’s concept of the role of English language in India; the primacy desired of the mother-tongue or what the Hind Swaraj calls provincial language and the desirability of using Hindustani as the lingua franca of India. In a letter to Lord Ampthill, Gandhi declares: “I no longer believe as I used to in Lord Macaulay as a benefactor through his Minute on education”. In the Hind Swaraj Gandhi writes “the foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us”. Subsequently, he accuses the English-knowing Indians for having enslaved India and says “the curse of the nation will rest not upon the English but upon us”. He rejects Macaulay’s thesis that Sanskrit and Persian have no foundational value for the Indian civilisation in the future and that English should replace them and become the new foundation language of modern India. If the English language is given this cultural role it is tantamount to committing national suicide.

Indians, who look upon English language as the foundation of the new Indian culture, are enslaving and not liberating India. He rejects Macaulay’s perception of English as the foundation of Indian civilisation but acknowledges the practical role played by English in ensuring the needs of scientific education and inter-provincial communication. Gandhi insists that the mother-tongue has to be the primary basis of the cultural life of each ‘province’ while he realizes that English has to be used to bring about the further growth of the mother-tongue. In the Hind Swaraj, Gandhi says unequivocally that “we have to improve all our languages. What subjects we should learn through them not be elaborated here. Those English books

which are valuable we should translate into the various Indian languages”. He also provides another insight that English should be the language of scientific education and the mother-tongue as the language of ethical education. Gandhi is stressing on how there exists a divide between the English speaking elite and the masses who speak their respective mother-tongues in India and how this divide results in social differentiation and a feeling of superiority among the elite and inferiority among the masses. It is this nefarious tendency of the new Indian elite that he is criticising and not the knowledge of the English language as such. He is aware of its benefits in the areas of communication and scientific progress and stresses on the need to place English within the framework of Indian nationalism. He insists on the need to improve all Indian languages. Gandhi opts for Hindi with the option of writing it in Devanagari or Persian script as the lingua franca for India and emphasises that ‘every cultured Indian will know in addition to his own provincial language; if a Hindu, Sanskrit; if a Mahomedan, Arabic; if a Parsee, Persian, all Hindi. Some Hindus should know Arabic and Persian; some Mahomedans and Parsees, Sanskrit. Several Northerners and Westerners should learn Tamil”. Gandhi consistently advocated States based on language. In 1918, when a proposal for the linguistic re-distribution of India was defeated in the Imperial Legislature, Gandhi wrote to the person who proposed the move: “Your idea is excellent but there is no possibility of its being carried out in the present atmosphere”. Three years later he told the Home Rule League that “to ensure speedy attention to people’s needs and development of every component part of the nation”, they should “strive to bring about a linguistic division of India”. Congress committees were created based on mother-tongue and that gave a tremendous encouragement to the national movement. Gandhi is confident that Indian nationalism has a golden opportunity to teach something new to the world, namely the model of a functioning multi-lingual and multi-religious nation. Gandhi repeatedly stressed, like Rammohun and Vivekananda, on religious pluralism and on the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. He earnestly pleads with his followers to ‘remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stands low in the scales of philosophical comparison’. His

encounter with the missionaries in South Africa played a crucial part in the development of his ideas. Their willingness to discuss religious issues with Gandhi makes him realize the importance of religion and makes him see the positive and negative side to their teachings. On the positive side, he adopts the evangelical outlook that God guides people and shares their belief that organisations like the Church and other voluntary associations should become instruments for reforming society and alleviating human miseries. However, he could not reconcile to their narrow view that one particular religion alone could be true and considers this as their most serious limitation. He rejects religious conversion as an ethical failure to think that it is the duty of any religion to remove persons from another religion is a violation of the integrity of family and community relationships.

4.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE CONGRESS AND THE BRITISH POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES

In the Hind Swaraj Gandhi makes an assessment of the Indian National Congress from its inception till 1909. Chapters 1-3 and part of Chapter 20 is devoted to this subject. To the Reader's assertion that the young in India are indifferent to the Congress as they think of it as an instrument for perpetuating British rule and the need to abandon the constitutional mode of agitation, and to adopt violence, Gandhi points out that despite its inadequacies, the Congress was the first institution that has "enthused us with the idea of nationality". It has brought together Indians from different parts of India and has insisted that the "Nation should control revenue and expenditure" and "has always desired self government after the Canadian model" and has given us "a foretaste of Home Rule". It would be improper to be dismissive of the Congress as that would "retard the fulfilment" of the final object of attaining true swaraj.

Gandhi pays tribute to Dadabhai Naoroji as the "Father of the Nation" and the "author of Nationalism and that his drain theory has taught us how the "English had sucked our life blood. Gokhale's embrace of poverty is out of

his sense of patriotism and Tyabji “through the Congress, sowed the seed of Home Rule”. He insists that “a nation that is desirous of securing Home Rule cannot afford to despise its ancestors”. Gandhi also endorses the role played by Hume in the rise and development of Congress nationalism and does not see anything inconsistent if the Indians and British could work together and nourish Indian nationalism. He acknowledges that “many Englishmen desire Home Rule for India”. The British who have made India their home deserve fair treatment which the Extremists and the Revolutionary nationalists deny. Gandhi also dismisses in the Hind Swaraj, the extremists as retrograde and irresponsible and terms the anarchists and the terrorists as a lunatic fringe of the Indian political scene. Rejecting both these two positions he supports the programs, ideals and the methods of the moderate elements in the Congress in India. Gandhi established the Natal Indian Congress modelled after the Indian National Congress in South Africa and followed strictly the well known British practice of ‘prayer, petition and protest’. In the footsteps of the early liberals like Rammohun, Gokhale and Surendranath Bannerjee, Gandhi acknowledges that the British connection with India is providential and that Indians are actually “proud to be under the British crown because they think that England will prove India’s deliverer”. Gandhi, like the early liberals, had total faith in the ‘British love of justice and fair play’ and the British constitutional practice of equality before law applies not just to British citizens but for all. Racial discrimination is ‘Un British’ and does not have the sanction of the British constitutional practice. He differentiates between the localisms of the British bureaucracy in India from the larger British constitutional practice. He idolises the British constitution as it guarantees individual freedom and racial equality. He desires that India graduate to equal partnership with the Empire and by helping the British, India could qualify for swarajya or self-rule. During his stint in South Africa, Gandhi tried to remind the British that racial discrimination is a violation of the letter and spirit of the British constitution. His technique of Satyagraha is also an offshoot of his understanding of both British history and character. Convinced that redress of grievances could be expected only when people demonstrate their

willingness to suffer to getting relief underlines his philosophy of satyagraha. Taking a leaf from the British Suffragists, he asks the Indians in South Africa to emulate them by developing a capacity to endure suffering. Gandhi points out to the century-long struggle laced with suffering and sacrifice that the British women waged to secure the right to vote and which eventually compelled the British government to concede to the demand of the Suffragists. Many years later, he recollects that “an Englishman never respects you till you stand up to him. Then, he begins to like you. He is afraid of nothing physical, but he is mortally afraid of his own conscience, if even you appeal to it and show him to be in the wrong. He does not like to be rebuked for wrong doing at first, but he will think over it, and it will get hold of him and hurt him till he does something to put it right”. Gandhi is categorical that the technique of Satyagraha is most effective if used against the British though it could be used everywhere and be an alternative to war in resolving conflict.

Writing in 1904, he observes “Earnestness commands success everywhere. It does so much more in the British Dominions. If the British machinery is slow to move, the genius of the nation being conservative, it is also quick to perceive and recognize earnestness and unity”. Reflecting on this again in 1907, he points out that the British would concede if the people are willing to sacrifice even their lives for the cause. But they would ignore even the genuine demands, when they are merely verbal. Even in their own country the British follow the same principles. South Africa also teaches him two other basic lessons which he implements in India and they are: (a) united struggle of all irrespective of caste, creed and religion and (b) the sublime importance of open non-violent struggle.

Gandhi’s innate respect for the British sense of justice continued even after his return to India and, during the First World War, he recruited soldiers for the British army unconditionally whereas, both Tilak and Jinnah refused to do so without any advancement of the nationalist cause. This confidence which he had in the ultimate British sense of justice was shattered by the horrors of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. However, in spite of this shock and his overall criticism of Western civilization, and the parliamentary

system, he proclaimed in 1921, that his immediate aim was parliamentary swaraj, whereas the rest was for a distant future. His faith in the British sense of fair play was shaken but not his faith about the feasibility of the essential mechanism of the British parliamentary institutions.

4.4 SELF-RULE: NEED TO BRIDGE THE GAP

BETWEEN THE ELITE AND THE MASSES

For Gandhi, Nationalism meant self-rule in which the whole community and not just the elite would be free and active; in which soul force and not brute force is the basis of public order and in which national interest is the supreme ethical criterion of state action. He rejects the proposition that a government by national elite is beneficial simply because it is a government by the national elite as evident from his virulent criticism of the Indian princes whose tyranny is worse than that of the British. Reminding the Reader in the Hind Swaraj, he points out “you will admit that the people under several Indian princes are being ground down. The latter mercilessly crush them. Their tyranny is greater than that of the English”.

Similarly he rejects the violent methods of Revolutionary nationalists by criticism of Madan Lal Dhingra and says ‘those who will rise to power by murder will certainly not make the nation happy’. He insists that the soul force is more effective than brute force and cites the example of Tulsidas’ message of daya (compassion) as the true ultimate basis of dharma.

He is pragmatic enough to understand that state violence cannot be completely eliminated but suggests that whatever violence the state may have to exercise must be exercised in the interest of the people as a whole, and not just in the interest of the national elite and that too, strictly within the parameters of daya. He stresses on the right balance between daya and national interest. The error of modern nationalism is its separation which is why the elite act in a manner that is detrimental to the masses. In defining a nation, Gandhi advances the real meaning of swaraj as mental condition and an external condition. As mental condition it means: (1) inner liberation from the temptations of greed and power which modern civilization offers;

(2) freedom from hatred towards the national 'enemy', the British and (3) of active love for the Indian masses. Swaraj as external condition is (1) political independence from alien domination and (2) of life-long dedication to the task of improving the material conditions of poverty and caste oppression of the Indian people. Swaraj is not replacing the English sahibs with Indian 'brown' sahibs as that is tantamount to 'English rule without the Englishman; of wanting the tiger's nature but not the tiger; of making India English and when that happens it will be called not Hindustan but Englishstan'.

He reminds of Mazzini's vision of freedom which involves the whole of Italian people different from that of Garibaldi and his associates of merely driving the Austrians by force of arms. Gandhi says "I am sure you do not wish to reproduce such a condition (as that of modern Italy) in India.... I believe that you want the millions of Indians to be happy, not that you want the reins of Government in your hands". Swaraj is not merely getting rid of the British but also the fascination for modern civilization which teaches the Indian elite to oppress the Indian people. The Hind Swaraj proposes nineteen points in the last chapter that involves the moral transformation of the Indian elite and addresses it to the professional classes- the doctors, lawyers, scientists, administrators, politicians and business executives- to become instruments of service to the nation first and aspiring for money or status as secondary. The pursuit of artha or money has to be within the framework of dharma which means adopting machinery for national development that is conducive to the health of the body and soul, the well-being of the weak and the poor and not just the wealthy and the powerful. Gandhi's stress on Khadi symbolises this requirement. Swaraj means self-reform, constitutional reforms and economic reforms. His commitment to truth as he sees it teaches him to appreciate the beauty of compromise which he underlines as the essence of satyagraha. There is close link between swaraj and satyagraha as the latter is the key to the realization of the former. The former is self-rule and the latter is the way in which the individual, through voluntary self-sacrifice may gain control over himself. Extended into the political realm, it strengthens the individual soul force as he offers civil disobedience against

the government. Stressing on ends and means, Gandhi insists that the lofty goal of swaraj is attained only if there is the purest of means. Gandhi's ideal with the village as the basis of swaraj underlines the message of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The ideal village should produce its own food and cloth; should have reserve for its cattle, playgrounds for adults and children, its own theatre, school and water works. Each activity in it will be carried on cooperative basis. "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic or Panchayat having full powers... self sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world". In 1931, Gandhi outlined the nature of legislative organization for the Indian nation in his speech at the Second Round Table Conference as follows: 'each village would elect its own representatives to form an electorate for further election to the central or the federal legislature. It would be analogous to the pattern for the constitution of the All India Congress Committee where the villages elect their own little committees and these in turn would elect the taluk committees, followed by district councils which elect provincial councils. These would finally send their members to the central legislature. Only the villages could be practitioners of swadeshi; the villagers earn their bread labor and lead simple lives in the absence of machinery, doctors, railways and lawyers, and markets selling consumer goods'.

Tagore criticises Gandhi's directives regarding them to be medieval. The emphasis on simplicity would retard economic development, as the narrow form of swadeshi would result in restrictive provincial attitude, isolationism and provide unnecessary hostility in the rest of the world. He does not agree with Gandhi's assertion that 80% of the Indian people were peasants and that for six months in a year they did not have meaningful work. It is neither wise that the middle class spend their free time spinning the yarn. He questions the desirability of the spinning-wheel. Tagore is convinced that Gandhi's plans would lead to India's isolation preventing western knowledge and advancement from reaching India. In response to these charges, Gandhi replied that Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore

humanitarian. He defends the use of spinning-wheel as that is the only way to 'realize' the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Its purposes are to symbolise 'sacrifice for the whole nation'. Regarding narrow provincialism and the dangers of this kind of nationalism, Gandhi says: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown off my feet by any". Gandhi does not regard his patriotism to be exclusive: 'it is calculated not to hurt any other nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world". Gandhi sees nation as consisting of individual human components and not, as Dalton states it, "as a transcendent entity, possessed of a soul and a form of freedom of its own. He thinks of swaraj first in terms of the individual and then in terms of society. He says 'swaraj of the people means the sum total of the swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. He also stresses on social reform for attaining swaraj and foremost among the aims of social reform are what he calls the three pillars of swaraj: Hindu-Muslim unity, the abolition of untouchability and the uplift of India's villages.

Jayantnuja Bandhopadhyaya identifies six ideals of Indian nationalism and these are: (1) anti-imperialism (2) anti-racism (3) Asianism (4) internationalism (5) non-violence and (6) democracy. These ideals found their fullest exposition under Gandhi's leadership. It is the strength of these ideals that prevented the international communist movement from making any significant headway in India between the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Independence of India in 1947. The two most important ideological points of Indian nationalism are anti imperialism and democracy and for most, non-violence a tactic rather than a policy. Anti imperialism remains the fundamental aim of Indian nationalism.

The Marxists by accusing Gandhi of being bourgeois overlooked his role as a social critic and his protest against existing inequalities and the constructive programmes aimed at eliminating existing social evils. For Gandhi the causes of disparities in the Indian society are due to imperialistic exploitation and the limitation of the capitalist industrialised civilization of the West. By concentrating on the political aspects of his personality, the

Marxists missed the critic Gandhi, who felt deeply the acute disparities in the Indian society and tried to resolve them in his own way. Nirmal Kumar Bose argues that Gandhi defies classification as the prophet of bourgeois nationalism in India. First, the means that Gandhi employed are such that they will lead successfully to the end only if the masses become self-acting towards the latter part of the revolution. And the chances are that if the masses gain success through their fully developed conscious strength, they will also refuse to be exploited in future by anybody who wishes to ride upon their back. Second, Gandhi did not want India to benefit at the expense of any other nation. He considered humanity as one family.

Therefore, according to Bose, Gandhi transcended bourgeois nationalism.

Gandhi, like Vivekananda and Aurobindo, accepts the proposition that it is in the nature of man to struggle for self-realization or spiritual freedom. This is the highest aim of the individual and how he attains the conquest of his self is the key to success. Gandhi also stresses that political independence by itself is incomplete unless accompanied by a moral or spiritual transformation of the individual in society. Not only does Gandhi insist on moral progress but also in the elimination of slave mentality. Equally important is the social reform, with the help of constructive programme, to realising the three pillars of swaraj and thus establishes close link between freedom and social harmony.

The popular image of Gandhi depicts him as an ardent nationalist who was engaged in selfless and dedicated service for the liberation of India from British colonial domination, through non-violent techniques of political action. This, indeed, is true. Gandhi was deeply involved in the struggle for political emancipation and social and economic reconstruction of India, to which he devoted his whole attention. However, what is often not understood is that Gandhi did so in a world context. His contributions to Indian political independence should not be viewed as concerning only one or two nations in an isolated manner.

Gandhi himself had said: "My mission is not merely the freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through the realization of the freedom of India, I

hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or exploitation of other nationalities.”

Gandhi’s movement for national independence was, in a way, aimed at the reordering of the world power structure, which was based on the imperial-colonial pattern of international relations. He wanted freedom for India, not to isolate her from the rest of the world, but to promote international cooperation. True international cooperation was possible only when the interacting nations were sovereign and equal before international law. By ending Colonialism he hoped to remove one of the root causes of exploitation and domination of weaker countries by stronger ones.

As Erik Erikson in his book, ‘Gandhi’s Truth’ points out, Gandhi and the Indian nationalists maintained that British colonialism had resulted in the exploitation and draining of the Indian sub-continent in four areas of national life, the economic and political, cultural and spiritual. Therefore, Gandhi had declared, “We hold it to be a sin before man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this four-fold disaster to our country.”

Gandhi attacked the evil at its very root; he wanted to destroy the institution of colonialism, to begin with in India, and thereby put a stop to the ‘four-fold exploitation’ with a view to restore India’s identity. Gandhi wanted to achieve this in a novel way through a non-violent revolution, through the Satyagraha movement. Unlike the Marxist-Leninist line which undermines the individual role in history and maintains that an unjust social and economic system can be attacked by bringing the state under the dictatorship of the proletariat through a revolution, Gandhi held that “the root of the problem does not lie in the authority of the state, but in the character of the individual which has made the existence of that state possible.” Therefore, Gandhi set to bring about a radical transformation of the unjust social system not through coercion or through transference of power to a centralised state, but through individual reformation and non-violent social and political action. This he called the Satyagraha movement, a movement led by a moral

force which is generated by a sincere desire to follow the path of Truth in individual behaviour and social action.

Satyagraha was not merely an instrument for realization of political, economic and other material ends but also a state of spiritual and moral self-transformation in man. Through such a movement he strived to secure an India of his dreams, an independent India free from colonial domination, and where the individual would have the integrity to contribute to a high moral order which would create and maintain social justice and harmony. After obtaining political independence, Gandhi wanted India to become an ideal democracy.

A democracy established on the principle of non-violence was to be of a unique kind. Gandhi's ideal non-violent democracy was a federation of decentralised, self-sufficient, self-administered, interdependent and cooperative village republics. In such a democracy power was decentralised. In an ideal non-violent democracy of Gandhi's conception there was no need of a state. Gandhi had said, "Political power means capacity to regulate national life through representations. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power, because there is no state." But Gandhi knew the limitations in realising such an ideal. So he added, "But the ideal is never fully realized in life."

Here Gandhi's 'anarchy' is not the one that leads to disorder but that which relates to a condition of statelessness as a result of the existence of an enlightened harmony that dispenses with the necessity of a state to enforce behaviour patterns. The power structure of a nonviolent society would be distributed in such a way that each individual or each cooperative unit of individuals would constitute a power unit, and society would equilibrate itself on the basis of the existence of this power structure. In his ideal stateless democracy or enlightened anarchy, there was no use of force in any form, whereas society acquired equilibrium by individual perfection. Such a non-violent society would consist of groups of settled villages and life

would be regulated through cooperation, bread-labor and mutual love. Individuals in a non-violent society were to work for the establishment of a social order which ensured the greatest good of all.

A non-violent India was expected to strive for removal of injustice anywhere and crusade for the cause of suffering humanity in any part of the world. Gandhi's patriotism "was not exclusive; it was calculated not only not to hurt another nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word." Gandhi had said that "we want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want freedom of my country, so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be, the whole country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism." His movements for self-government (swaraj) and for the use of home-made goods (Swadeshi) might have come into conflict with the interests of other countries, especially those of England. But then Gandhi's movements were directed primarily against the injustices done by England in keeping another nation in subjugation by force, thereby denying it opportunities for free development. He believed that by enabling India to be free he was not only helping India but also Britain in an indirect way, i.e. by removing the possibility for England to be unjust to another nation. Besides, the moral strength, which an independent India could give to other subject nations, was another factor which convinced Gandhi that true nationalism was a contribution to internationalism. Thus, Gandhi wanted national independence before international cooperation': "You want cooperation between nations for the salvation of civilization, I want it too, but cooperation presupposes free nations worthy of cooperation. If I am to help in creating or restoring peace and goodwill and resist disturbances thereof, I must have the ability to do so and I cannot do so unless my country has come to its own. At the present moment, the very movement for freedom in India is India's contribution to peace. For so long as India is a

subject nation, not only is she a danger to peace, but also to England which exploits India. Other nations may tolerate today England's imperialist policy and her exploitation of other nations, but they certainly do not appreciate it; and they would gladly help in the prevention of England becoming a greater and greater menace every day. Of course, you will say that free India can become a menace herself. But let us assume that she will behave herself with her doctrine of nonviolence, if she achieves her freedom through it and for all her bitter experiences of being a victim of exploitation". Gandhi's prediction, indeed, came true. India's achievement of freedom generated a wave of nationalistic movements in many subjected nations. The Afro-Asian resurgence and realization by colonial powers of the necessity to end colonial rule and the subsequent gaining of freedom by several countries could be linked with Gandhi's freedom movement.

Thus a colonially oriented world social structure has given way to a more democratically oriented one. The world power structure underwent a transformation in a non-exploitative direction. Yet the world is not devoid of exploitation, the old imperial-colonial pattern of power structure has been replaced by new types of alignments and power blocs. The world society of today retains its feudal characteristics in spite of the fact that colonies have received their freedom. The economic domination of a few countries still indirectly influences the less affluent developing countries. The time lag in economic development and technical progress is fully utilised to compensate for the loss of colonial power or realize neo-imperialistic ambitions. Though every national independent state is sovereign and such sovereignty is respected and all states are treated as equals before international law, in actuality the world scene today is a big power gamble in spite of the existence of the United Nations. "It (the United Nations) has already revealed its impotence to settle any serious conflict among the great powers. The great and small powers ignore it in connection with most important problems - the United Nations has degenerated into a mere screen for the power politics of the artificial and incidental majority of world state. Having neither the moral authority nor adequate physical power, it cannot perform the miracle of eliminating war and erecting a temple of eternal peace."

It is in this connection that the Gandhian view of a world social order merits consideration. Gandhi did not believe in the efficacy of a United Nations, because the United Nations, for all its virtues, is no help to creating, maintaining or enlarging the number of states. A modern state, with its military strength, always possesses potentialities for suppression of freedom internally and creation of wars or international conflicts externally. The establishment of a world state by merely extending the characteristics of a modern state, with or without surrendering national sovereignties, would suffer from the deficiencies of the latter, when viewed from a Gandhian angle. A world sovereign state above all national states may, after all, not be able to establish or maintain a peaceful world society, in spite of the military strength or power it may possess. Gandhi's opposition to the U.N. is to be understood in this perspective. He was opposed to the U.N. in so far as it possessed the attributes of a nation-state in regard to military potential and in regard to its opposition to decentralization of power and freedom of human development. However, it may not be construed from this that Gandhi was totally opposed to any type of international organization. If the U.N. functioned on the basis of the moral principles, Gandhi would not have difficulty in accepting the same.

The following quotations of Gandhi are of significance in the context of his understanding of Nationalism and Internationalism:

- "I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual being pure sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all."
- "My religion has no geographical limits. There is no limit to extending our services to our neighbours across state-made frontiers."
- "I believe that true democracy can only be an outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs".

□ “I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service to India includes the service of humanity. Isolated independence is not the goal of the world state. It is voluntary independence. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence”. Such a federation of independent sovereign states will not circumscribe the national state but would permit it full freedom, will remove the causes of friction and conflict that may arise from time to time and promote harmony and social justice.

In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, “Gandhi was an intense nationalist; he was also at the same time a man who felt he had a message not only for India but for the world, and he ardently desired world peace. His nationalism, therefore, had a certain world outlook and was entirely free from any aggressive intent. Desiring the independence of India he had come to believe that a world federation of interdependent states was the only right goal, however distant that might be”.

The Gandhian model of power distribution in a national or world context is enunciated in the following statement which Gandhi made in elucidating his concept of decentralized state power: “There will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles - at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from the centre.”

The Gandhian view of a world social order is essentially one of a moral order.

Satyagraha (soul force) symbolised for Gandhi the attainment of moral ends through moral means. Satyagraha as a philosophy of social action was not merely an instrument to attain political, economic and other material ends, but for the spiritual and moral transformation of man. It was a soul-force

generated out of a motivation to follow the path of truth and non-violence and was based on self-help, self-sacrifice and faith in God.

Gandhi's theory of non-violence is a positive philosophy and not a passive ethics. It is based on the assumption that men who wish to Practice it must have certain moral and spiritual pre-requisites, a positive love for all beings and the pursuit of truth. The tradition of nonviolence perhaps existed in all cultures but Gandhi converted it into a practical ethics which could be applied in day to day life. This offered tremendous possibilities for contemporary India as well as the whole world. Here was an alternative to physical force which had so far been acknowledged as the sine qua non of the social order in the soul force (Satyagraha) or the spiritual and moral power.

Acharya Kripalani supplements this point in the following passage: "The moral principles which guide the conduct of individuals in the social field must also guide their conduct in the political and the international fields. If we are to be saved from the cruel contradictions of a moral man living in an immoral (or at best amoral) political and international world order, we must find a unifying principle in life which will save us from this moral dichotomy.

This unifying principle, Gandhi holds, is supplied as in social life so in political and international life and conduct by morality."

Assessing the contributions of Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer wrote, "Gandhi continues what Buddha began. In the Buddha, the spirit of love set itself the task of creating different spiritual conditions in the world; in Gandhi, it undertakes to transform all worldly conditions. Would the world tend to order itself in the directions indicated by Buddha and Gandhi or dismiss them as other worldly, Utopian, and set to destroy itself by the creation of artificial power blocs, perpetuation of exploitation and promotion of international conflicts? Sanity would undoubtedly advocate for choosing the twin path of spirituality and morality in international relations and establishment of a self-sustaining harmonious world social order.

1. Check your Progress

1. Gandhi's View of Swaraj(Self Rule)

4.5 LETS SUM UP

Gandhi rejects the popular perception that 'India has become a nation under the British rule'and disputes the claim of those who argue that India is a nation after the British introduced western ideas and to the changes brought about by modern means of communication such as the railways and the telegraph. His claim that India is nation is based on two assumptions of an all India consciousness. He insists on the need to encourage Indian languages and developing Hindustani as the lingua franca and the mother-tongue has to be the primary basis of the cultural life of each 'province'. Gandhi pleads for religious pluralism and allowing every religion to freely profess and practice what they consider as truth. Gandhi also dismisses in the Hind Swaraj, the extremists as retrograde and irresponsible and terms the anarchists and the terrorists as a lunatic fringe of the Indian political scene. Rejecting both these two positions he supports the programmed, ideals and the methods of the moderate elements in the Congress in India. For Gandhi, Nationalism means self-rule in which the whole community is involved and not just the elite. Gandhi insisted on moral progress and the elimination of slave mentality. Equally important is social reform with the help of constructive programmed to realizing swaraj and thus establishes close link between freedom and social harmony.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Arth : **Money**
Dhrama: **Duties**

4.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) How does Gandhi perceive India as a nation?
- 2) What is Gandhi's assessment of the Indian National Congress?
- 3) Why did Gandhi admire the British political institutions and practices?
- 4) Why does Gandhi insist that there is a need to bridge the gap between the elite and the masses to bring about self-rule?

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4.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- In defining a nation, Gandhi advances the real meaning of swaraj as mental condition and an external condition.
- As mental condition it means: (1) inner liberation from the temptations of greed and power which modern civilisation offers;
- (2) freedom from hatred towards the national 'enemy', the British and
- (3) of active love for the Indian masses.
- Swaraj as external condition is (1) political independence from alien domination and
- (2) of life-long dedication to the task of improving the material conditions of poverty and caste oppression of the Indian people.

UNIT 5 GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

STRUCTURE

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Gram swarajya : scheme of the decentralized polity

5.3 Peace

5.4 Global peace

5.5 Nation

5.6 Religion and spirituality

5.7 The reflection

5.8 Let's Sum Up

5.9 Keywords

5.10 Questions for review

5.11 suggested Readings

5.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Learn about the democracy
- know the key aspects of Democracy
- understand the basis of his progress
- Learn about the importance of peace
- understand the basis of Gandhi's ideas of Peace

5.1 INTRODUCTION:

Democracy is a concept before it is a fact, and because it is a concept it has no single precise and agreed meaning. It has had very different meanings and connotations in its long history, and is understood differently today in the context of different social and economic systems. What is called democracy in a particular country or region would not satisfy some of those, both past and present, who have an entirely different conception of it. A historical perspective reveals a rather puzzling and paradoxical feature of the history of democracy. For most of its long history, from the classical Greeks to the present day, democracy was seen by the enlightened and educated as one of the worst types of government and society imaginable. Democracy was more or less synonymous with rule of the 'mob', and was definition, a threat to all the central values of a civilized and orderly society. C.B. Macpherson puts this point very well: 'Democracy used to be a bad word. Everybody who was anybody knew that democracy in its original sense of rule by the people or government in accordance with the will of the bulk of the people, would be a bad thing-fatal to individual freedom and to all the graces of civilized living. That was the position taken by pretty nearly all men of intelligence from the earliest historical times down to about a hundred years ago. Then, within fifty years, democracy became a good thing. In the modern world, there is a common-sense complacent attitude towards democracy wherein it is generally claimed "We all know which nations or states are democratic which are not. But do we? For instance: is the test of a democracy the fact that a government is elected by the votes of the people? When Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933, he did so through a normal constitutional process, and as leader of the party with the largest single share of the popular vote in elections for the Reichstag. He thus had a good democratic claim to office. Yet no one would want to describe the Third Reich as a democracy? Elections of a kind used to be held in the Soviet Union and the other communist countries, and many one-party states. But many people would hesitate to call these states democratic. One

common conception of democracy is that it means 'government by the people', or the people's elected representatives - since that in large modern states the people themselves likely to be divided among themselves, the government the people, but at best of a majority of them. Already In practice it means government by the representatives virtually everywhere today, democracy is taken representative system. Like 'freedom', 'equality', 'justice', is a term, winch whatever its precise meaning, will principle or ideal, and for that reason alone it is never The western world has always tended to be assume that democracy is something which 'they*' and idealistically anxious to export to less fortunate democracy would therefore largely be an exercise perhaps, with some account of how this happy such an account is neither critical nor challenging. democracies of the communist world has only however grotesque a mockery communist and there were traces in their theory and perhaps even conception of what democracy might mean which complacency.² Nevertheless, there are good reasons to think only in terms of present day realities - as a type societies possess and others do not - will find themselves of universal suffrage or centrality of popular elections complete realization of democracy. These two can be regarded as only the first steps on the society. The practical implication is that democracy of modern polities'. Democracy is likely to remain 'critical' concept: that is, a norm or ideal by which will always be some further extension or growth say that a perfect democracy is the end attainable, perfect justice. It is rather that the idea and ideal rather than as a prop, to complacency. The Gandhian Paradigm that contemporary liberal democracy is in a crisis, and economic sphere, but, has permeated the socio-cultural reintroduce political culture and political psychology as vital of democracy. As western democracies move towards the prospect of slower growth and increasing scarcities, the old model of interest group cleavages may lead to phenomenal cleavages. To meet these new challenges, the need for restraint, responsibility and community becomes more important than in easier, carefree times, and Gandhi's theory of democracy may help to understand and meet these challenges. An analysis of Gandhian thought on state would reveal that his

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critics have gone astray in evaluating his concept of state as illogical, unreal or Utopian. His theory of state is an idealized realism. A strong willed Gandhi, does not surrender to the apparent deformities of the real but desires to gradually ascend from the real to the ideal through a chain reaction of revolutionary reforms. Gandhi is not discountenanced as was Plato, in his consciousness of the real because of the failure to achieve the ideal. The failure, if any, owes itself to the frailties of human nature, the limitations of the real entering into human experience and other logical discordants. There is need to dispel the illusion that a parliamentary democracy is not in tune with Gandhi's philosophy. What has come to be ultimately by Gandhi is the imminent goal of 'swarajya' which is an improved state of representative parliamentary democracy; Gandhi's theory of the 'ideal state' can be comprehended better if the same can be viewed in the hierarchy of three stages. (1) The Ultimate ideal Gandhi had no love for the organized institutions of political power. As such the ideal political order of Gandhi's perception would be a stateless society. Gandhi describes his ideal stateless order as Ramrajya, which to him is not synonymous to Hindu Raj but refers to a divine State wherein external controls over individual's inner conscience are removed to their fullest possible extent. Gandhi calls such a stage, a state of enlightened anarchy. By anarchy, however, he does not refer to a state of lawlessness but to a well ordered system, wherein individual would acquire such perfection so as to become completely self-regulated requiring no external controls, or institutions representing coercive authority. When a perfect individual, realizes the ideal of ahimsa) his perfection, dedicate himself to the ultimate truth and ultimate reason and inner conscience pervade his entire conduct, external controls become not only undesirable but also of no consequence In such a State every individual would be his own ruler but his rule will realization of spiritual unity of all human beings good an essential ingredient of his own identification the ideal political of order of Gandhi's perception autonomous individual. Gandhi concedes that the individual's own realization of the ideal of perfect Ahimsa. As such

attain as to draw the line of Euclid. But the difficulty the significance of the same, But essentiality between the ultimate ideal and a realizable goal

5.2 GRAM SWARAJYA: SCHEME OF THE DECENTRALIZED POLITY

To Gandhi centralization of political power amounts to himsa. Thus the basis of his ideal democratic order is decentralization of political power.⁸ He called his ideal democratic order as gram-swarajya. In the scheme of Gram Swarajya, as envisaged, every village would be a republic or panchayat having full powers. For this every village would be required to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to extent of defending itself against the whole world, This would, however, not exclude dependence, on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. Such social order must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in opinion, would not be possible without a living belief in God. In the whole structure composed of innumerable villages, there would be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life would not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it would be an oceanic circle with the individual at the center, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole became life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they would be integral units Therefore the outermost circumference would not wield power to crush the inner circle but would give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. Drawing a sketch of the ideal of his contemplation, Gandhi pointed out to Louis Fischer in 1942: "There are seven hundred thousand villages in India. Each would be organized according to the will of it & citizens all of them voting. Then there would be seven hundred thousand votes and not four hundred million. Each village, in other words, would have one vote. They would elect their district representatives and the district provincial administration, and these in turn would elect a president chief executive." His scheme of village-swaraj, as he believes, will

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ultimately governed community life, in which there would be no need for affairs of the community.¹³ In such political order there would be no place for legislatures legislative authority in a centralized manner. Legislative power levels under a unified structure wherein' the ultimate source will The national legislatures shall in turn obtain these powers from levels starting from the Gram panchayats, denoting the legislative the grass root level .Though in a perfect political order, there shall be no necessity force or police, Gandhi as practical idealist, conceded that police and army would be essential, as he was yet to be convinced preserved without their aid. The police of Gandhi's conception would, however, be of a the present-day force. Its ranks would be composed of believers be servants, no masters, of the people. The police force might they would be rarely used, if at all. In fact, the policemen would confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between would be few and far between in a non-violent State, because majority would be so great as to command the respect of the Similarly, there would be no room for communal disturbances. In his ideal democracy in the village life would be simpler, economy, decentralized. Consuming only what they produced be self-sufficient. Work in the village would revolve around provide everyone with useful labor. Gandhi laid considerable fields and handicraft industries and insisted the worker must and not become so dependant on mechanized work that be without it. Work would be localized in cottages, not in Gandhi, 'distribution can be qualized when production is localized; distribution is simultaneous with production. By concentrating all activity in the villages, Gandhi believed elementary necessities of life would remain would work cooperatively, pooling their labor expected that the competition of capitalism would by manual labor with 'the struggle for mutual He projected an agrarian based society in which and politically self-contained. Government would be locally controlled by of five persons elected by the people would resolve of the community how to avoid disputes. Although all of the elements of his non-violent villages, armed forces, their power would be diffused, base. Non-violence would be the ordering principle in Gandhi's democracy. Decision-making would be highly

diffused and there would be few 'political' issues, as such. He believed that some of the problems which confronted the village could be solved through edicts of political authorities or specialists who buttressed their solutions with the threats of violence. But the best way for the political system to Practice non-violence was to be relatively inactive. Similar to Jefferson and Thoreau Gandhi was convinced 'that state is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least'. Since it was not practicable to realize fully the ideal of non-violence in a society, Gandhi considered the enforcement of punishment by the State as unavoidable. However; although insisting on the theory of punishment he wished to provide it a non-violent nature in essence Perception of A Non-Violent Democracy:

In a logical sequence, reflecting his ultimate ideal, Gandhi insisted on the imminent realization of the last of the above scheme so that the second ideal could be materialized in due course. This non-violent democracy is virtual a reformative gesture for the transformation of a centralized system. It is this system that Gandhi desired to establish in the real form of welfares order through institutional, structural, attitudinal and conceptual changes and make the democratic institutions a vehicle of public service rather than avarice for power. He desired to utilize the institution of state in this system for the ends of social, moral, spiritual and economic elevation of the people. There is liable to be no room, in this system for acrimony among majority and the minorities. The political ethics of Gandhi discards all utilitarian legal wrangles. Gandhi realized that it was impossible to achieve any this fact alone, did not minimize the significance of the line of Euclid which, has no width and which nobody has much has been achieved in geometry by keeping that As a practical idealist he realized that it was very The realization of this prompted him to propose his based on ahimsa. State as such is not entirely abolished in his ideal democracy, but, in fact, its authority is decentralized. He wishes to establish truth and ahimsa as the bases of his ideal democracy. Firm in his view, that violence violates the very spirit of democracy, Gandhi observes democracy, so long as it is

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sustained by violence cannot provide for, nor protect the weak. notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as strongest and that can never happen except through non-violence.²⁸ Non-violent democracy, to him, is a preliminary stage in the process of achievement the ultimate ideal. He admitted that, a government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent because it represents all the people as a whole. Hence, he conceded the necessity police force etc. even in a predominantly non-violent society. As he said: "I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it. A Government representing, society will use the least amount of force. But no Government worth its name can suffer anarchy to prevail. Hence that even under a Government based primarily on violence, a small police force will be necessary." In his opinion it is not the procedures or institutions which make a government truly democratic. Democracy is essentially based on certain ideals that the government should proclaim to achieve. Truth, ahimsa social, political and economic justice, communal harmony, tolerance towards the opponents, protection of the minorities are the basic foundations of democratic order. Explaining democracy as he conceived it, Gandhi said: "Such a government does not mean the rule of the majority, but protection of the interests of even the smallest limb of the realm." Democracy was instrumental to his larger goals of non-violence and freedom. But was firm in his conviction that political solutions could not prove beneficial if they were considered apart from social and economic relations. If the institutional foundations of society inequalities, dependency and fear, then the political Gandhi did not subscribe to the Marxist rationale interests of the ruling class. The problem, He was willing to acknowledge the potency of inequality was not the sole or even the most stratification, industrialization and urbanization society where freedom was respected. And they as well. Arbitrary rule was antithetical to the no simple political system could guarantee government coupled with an equitable society achieving his goals. Gandhi was neither impressed by the parliamentary form of the majority nor by the totalitarian individuality. He

conceived what may be called conception of the state by the word 'swaraj' which anarchy achieved through non-violence. Democracy inherent danger of tyranny of majority democracy Nevertheless, to leave Gandhi's democratic miss much of his commitment to the democratic in promoting a non-violent, free society, and and growth. Gandhi's contribution to democratic theory is not that he offers specific institutional alternatives to representative democracy and pluralism, although he does that. Rather his importance comes from offering alternative ways of thinking about politics in general and democracy in particular. Gandhi's theory far from being the primitivistic yearnings of a withdrawn mystic - offers guidance in transforming what he called the 'nominal democracy of the modern western type into a truer or fuller democracy, which he referred to as 'purna swaraj' (complete or integral democracy), 'rajajya' (sovereignty of the individual based on pure moral authority), or sarvodaya (a social order promoting the good of all). He hoped to devise a system of government which secured freedom and individual integrity and which also promoted non-violence. And it is non- violence that is perhaps Gandhi's most original legacy to democratic theory. To the extent that any government relied on violence, Gandhi believed, it lost its legitimacy, whether it was a democracy or any other form of regime. One of the great tasks of political philosophers has been to make governments and their solutions have included rights, justice or equality. Government which upholds these ideals was legitimate values and security. For Gandhi violence represented a failure others about the justice of its position. And so the challenge some of the reasons why people refuse to acknowledge To deal with the problem of disagreement requires dialogue the members of society to find the common ground without physical conflict, and to respect one another's solution. Thus a democratic government of his conception shall be dedicated towards the overall upliftment of the masses, be it social, political, moral, economic or the like. In other words, the swaraj of his conception would include an altogether quadrupled upliftment of all its citizens. Dharma shall form the bed-rock of the democratic order and as such the government shall be secular and would

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grant full recognition to the freedom of religion, conscience and faith to each and every citizen, and shall also strive for communal harmony. But religious neutrality of the State should not mean an attitude of indifference towards dharma by the State. Attitude of A Democratic Government Elected officials frequently lose control of the very government they are charged govern and much of the business of governing is done by the bureaucracy. Whatever variant of contemporary democracy, each is becoming increasingly bureaucratic. As modern democratic society becomes more complex and its diverse parts grow increasingly interdependent, the need for co-ordination and efficiency have increased. Bureaucracy structure, its minute division. of labor, its heavy reliance on specialists and its impersonality. The irony of modern bureaucracy is that in attempting to rationalize diverse operations and introduce greater efficiency, it has become more removed from its constituencies and less responsible and responsive. Gandhi held that bureaucratic norms could not be reconciled with democracy. He insisted that we may often have to choose between efficiency and coordination or autonomy, citizen participation and equality. A democratic government of Gandhi's perception would be a government temperamentally recognizing the significance of individual freedom and consciously performing its duties towards the welfare, of the masses by carrying out the wishes of the people. He' observed that when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interference is truly democratic. such a condition is absent, the form of government Regarding the people as the repository of theory of government and thoroughly believed people is possible only so long as the consent unconsciously granted by the people. His idea that a democratic government justifies moral and economic good that it ensures observation: "Political power, in my opinion, cannot be our ultimate aim. It is one of the means used by men for their all-row advancement." Gandhi ascribes highest value to public opinion in a democratic setup, since he regards a government formed on public opinion to be a true democratic government. A democracy

of his idea shall never ignore public opinion as he regards the exercise of authority over the people without consulting them, to be nothing less than autocratic. The consensus of modern liberal thinking has been that modern societies are 'inherently pluralistic and diverse'. Therefore they stress upon the consequent need to reach a consensus or compromise among the various competing interests and groups within society. As a counter to crude majoritarianism this is considered the most democratic and prudent course. But according to Gandhi there are situations in which compromise is not possible, and some in which it is not desirable either. He believed that we should differentiate between needs and interests and that politics should be institutionally structured to give priority to basic needs. Gandhi also denies that interests are really natural in the sense that pluralists defined interests.

1. Check your Progress

1. Gandhi's Vision of Democracy

5.3 PEACE

Over many centuries, world civilization has witnessed countless instances of warfare, battles, and conflicts duly capable of employing the power of transmuting the human kind into forms what the emperors and rulers had never thought of. There existed peerless and rarest men among the human species who preached and practiced theories of peace that made the human race to evolve into a more enlightened genre living of what he is today on this planet.

Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest apostle of peace the world has seen after Buddha and Christ. His notion of peace is centered on nonviolence, individualism, soul force and forgiveness. At first glance, global peace

initiatives might be perceived as far-flung methodologies that have wholly diverged from his ideologies. Many modern researchers and philosophers feel that today's conflicts are far more complex, so as their solutions. Global peace, global citizen, neo-modern trends and global issues have placed Gandhi at the backseat of the global forum. But, there exists a fundamental correlation of what Gandhi had said and what the world is doing these days to combat violence and bring peace. This paper tries to find the relevance of Gandhi's dictum and how his ideologies can be put in current day's global peace initiatives. It also traverses through various dimensions of peace one could think of in upholding global peace at micro, individualistic levels.

5.4 GLOBAL PEACE

World peace is defined as an ideal of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and/or people. It generally includes an idea of planetary non-violence by which nations willingly cooperate, either voluntarily or by virtue of a system of governance that prevents warfare. Today, peace has predominantly become political work towards settlement of issues between the nations through military involvement, cessation of arms and weapons and dialogue on less-violent, civilian matters. Peace has also included some humanitarian efforts that stretch its helping hands to the calamity-hit regions in the world. World peace is defined as an ideal of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and/or people. It generally includes an idea of planetary non-violence by which nations willingly cooperate, either voluntarily or by virtue of a system of governance that prevents warfare. Today, peace has predominantly become political work towards settlement of issues between the nations through military involvement, cessation of arms and weapons and dialogue on less-violent, civilian matters. Peace has also included some humanitarian efforts that stretch its helping hands to the calamity-hit regions in the world. Today, governments worldwide have not used much of democratic means to maintain peace, rather bound to display their military character and power to

settle down issues that disturbed peace. They often fail to realize the fact that violence erupts at the social level, commutes to the political level and seeking a resolution finally at the military level. Diplomatic efforts have become more so customary and ineffective in front of military powers. The economic status of the nations too plays a crucial role in determining the degree of success of any peace initiative. Gandhi is not seen in this platform of world peace. His ideologies remain neglected at the global forum and are considered as a tonic for social and cultural development only. As he is known as the Father of the nation politically, economically his dictum stands as a medicine merely for building local economy. Global communities have not come and thought of Gandhi as a "solution provider", "conflict breaker" or even as a peace activist. World peace continues to be at the hands of world powers that use violence and warfare. Indeed the situation is so grim that even a global peace campaigner is quite plausibly to localize and narrow down himself and his campaign giving in to the pressures and rigid policies of the governments. Today political leaders take chances of peace in their hands and play a role in making or breaking the nations. Nations engage in dialogue and negotiations to settle down their ethnic problems and border issues. Political, diplomatic and media powers contribute their part to facilitate this peace process but hatred and hostilities dominate the situation as peace is not achieved at the individual levels. World governments fail to identify the key personals and power-centers that govern the war frameworks and conflict centers. Dialogues are meant for mutual understanding, not for nurturing hatred and obscuring manipulations. They shall not give the slightest chance for eruption of violence or war by both the military and the militant or rebel groups. Misrepresentation and shallow understanding of conflicts between the groups within a country and between the countries rather complicates the situation. Changing political conditions shall not set hurdles in the ongoing conflict resolution process. Gandhi said, "If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must therefore always submit to the arbitration

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of a third party." Many of today's conflict management techniques and resolution process have a clear shadow of what and how Gandhi had seen inter-national issues in his times. A war-hungry nation has nothing in this world whilst a starving nation needs every kind of help from the world. A nation endangering peace in the world has no security for itself. Peace can never be achieved by one-dimensional and unilateral talks or efforts. It has numerous facets of social, ethnical, religious and political elements and copious ways to deal with them to bring and stabilize worsened situations under control. The true character of a conflict must be identified and may perhaps be attributed any of those hidden elements. Gandhi's perception of bringing peace and resolving conflict had such a diversified point of interest every time when he insisted on taking fast to bring hostile situation under control. Whether there is a riot in the eastern Bengal or unrest in the north-western part of India, peace lived in his soul consciously demanding him to take on fast even if he resides in another corner of the country. Thus, peace becomes universal and eternal. In the following paragraphs, his views on peace, as he wrote or said on various occasions when violence and warfare prevailed over nonviolence and peace in the world. Today, governments worldwide have not used much of democratic means to maintain peace, rather bound to display their military character and power to settle down issues that disturbed peace. They often fail to realize the fact that violence erupts at the social level, commutes to the political level and seeking a resolution finally at the military level. Diplomatic efforts have become more so customary and ineffective in front of military powers. The economic status of the nations too plays a crucial role in determining the degree of success of any peace initiative. Gandhi is not seen in this platform of world peace. His ideologies remain neglected at the global forum and are considered as a tonic for social and cultural development only. As he is known as the Father of the nation politically, economically his dictum stands as a medicine merely for building local economy. Global communities have not come and thought of

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Truth - "Indeed a civilian resister offers resistance only when peace becomes impossible" - Mahatma Gandhi

How truthful these words are even today! Global peace has a minutest message from these wise words which could unfold itself into broader perspectives; a civilian government fighting with its own rebel citizens to uphold peace in a country; or, an highly civilized, democratized nation striving to fight cross-border conflicts with its neighbors to maintain peace in the region; or an individual civilian endeavoring into micro-level actions to build or to be part of a peaceful society; Hence, peace becomes life for everyone and everything in the world. Even a civilian's economic needs mount into greater pressure at times, creating economic warfare that disturbs peaceful living.

5. 5 NATION

Let the leaders of the nations ask a question to themselves in a global forum. How much of arms and weapons countries need in order to secure her from growing tensions? What exactly it means for a country to accept nuclear arms and chemical weapons? Are they really needed and if so, how much is needed?

Let the same leaders of the nations ask a question to themselves individually, privately talking closer to their hearts. How much of justice and tolerance countries do in order to maintain peace and harmony in their regions? What exactly would bring peace to a country devoid of war or

violence as a means? Even after war, how much of peace is left to us? It is a choice of means at crucial times. It is a choice of decisive, nonviolent approach towards peace at odd times. And, not many nations try to put themselves in such a thoughtful state when the situation arises. They fail to go with peace and surrender to other forces. The political, economic states of affairs of the nation swiftly take precedence amid promising hopes for peace.

Gandhi elegantly put this as a notion for nations who love peace and harmony: *“Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds.”*

5.6 RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

More than half of the fighting occurring in the world is caused due to quarrel between religious groups. Inter-religion and intra-religion differences are not new; but they get aggravated and become inexorable owing to the political differences and advantages. A fight for a natural resource easily turns into a religious-rage when there is a mixture of various religions in a particular region. A battle over the right to use a resource in a region is often fought with the existing feud in faith and beliefs of the people. In the recent decades, Islamic world - more particularly in the middle-east Asian countries, various sects of the Muslim people have indulged in battles. The inter-religious differences among the groups rose to the level of destructing each other sending devastating waves to the entire region. A careful study on the conflict on this region would reveal the truth about how incongruent and corrupt political systems kindle the religious feelings of the people. The differences in economic and political structures in these nations have taken toll the true character of the Islamic religion. As Gandhi put it, *“The very word Islam means peace, which is Nonviolence. Without prayer there is no inward peace.”* Their prayers have become just an integral part of a religion’s rituals rather than promoting peace among the people.

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Religious leaders continue to preach harmony but not the peace that tranquilizes the region. Striving hard to find peace from within our thought and mind is a tool for attaining peace where as the usage of arms and violent force will end up cleanly as a demon for destruction. Each one of us finds happiness in practicing some spiritual exercise that gives us a short-time relief from day-to-day pressures. The central power of peace as many people believe lies in the practice of spirituality. We try to fight with the outside world full of fuss and chaos and finally resort to the spiritual way of seeking inner peace. Some of us are even flopped in attaining the inner peace when our thoughts and relationships become hollow and worthless in times of grief and pain. The importance of peace is felt and experienced only at such times and one needs to master his (her) mind, body and soul to develop peace. *The gap between the inner peace and global peace must be filled with a path of nonviolence and a better understanding of the divergence between the self-identity and the global requirements.* Gandhi believed that *“Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts.”* Our religions too point the same to us. Gandhi was fascinated by *“The Bhagavad Gita”*, an essential scripture of Hinduism and he saw the great, mighty battle between *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* as the quest for truth and an end for injustice. According to him, *“Salvation of the Gita is perfect peace.”* We all shall strive to pray for global peace. Let us expand our horizons to bring peace in disturbed regions worldwide. Let prayer be a fuel that runs the vehicle of peace.

5.7 THE REFLECTION

The importance of peace can now be viewed as a perpetual answer to the differences and conflicts among the groups and nations that indulges into violent and terror acts. It is about examining the whole structure of the

systems challenging peace. It is about examining the ultimate motive of the rebellion war-hunger groups itself. In many parts of the world, violence is being used as a means to end the settlements and political vengeance. Every time peace is ignored and peaceful talks been disregarded, a plot for violence is seeded. It grows on and on to spread a larger network of terror and violence and finally it empowers the whole nation. More talks and less action stimulate the same effect and become amalgamated with it. Collectively, the force of terror and violence becomes the superior power, and the peaceful missions and strategies become futile. Yet, the true objective of the entire episode of violence and disharmony will never be met by violent means. In a war between terror and peace, both fought for an objective, it is the peace that has to win surpassing all the effects of the terror.

In accordance with the above understanding, the world has few key questions. Is Gandhi's ideology of *inner peace or soul force* realized in the prevailing intolerance and divergence in many parts of the world? Can a "Gandhi" endure and fight back with the same energy with injustice and repression what Mahatma Gandhi had in his times? Looking at the world, we see many individuals who have solely made a change, smaller or larger, in their communities with bountiful of peace in their thoughts and actions. Nobel peace prize winners in the current decade like Mr. Martti Ahtisaari (2008), Mr. Muhammed Yunus (2006), Ms. Wangari Maathai (2004) and Ms. Shirin Ebadi (2003) have effectively changed their parts of the world to maintain amity and bring peace into existence, hitherto had seen only injustice, inequality and communal turbulence. On the other hand, it must also be viewed how the leaders of the U.S.A., the Nobel winners Mr. Jimmy Carter (2002), Mr. Al Gore (2007) and Mr. Barack Obama (2009) had played a crucial role for understanding the global conflicts through political lens, effecting lasting peace across the globe.

5.8 LETS SUM UP

Peace and non-violence are the two pillars of any peace process that upholds the human race's very livelihood. These two are in-separable. Peace must be the fruit of any non-violent action or protest to settle a dispute. Only such a resolved state of dispute will be full of peace and harmony. As an outcome of the peace process, parties concerned must also understand one main fact that there is not a clear winner or clear loser. When the conflict between two individuals or groups or nations comes to an end, both the winner and the loser will have to be peaceful upon agreeing wholeheartedly to the terms of the winning conditions. And, this is also the fundamental spirit of humanity. Therefore, the final accord the parties willing to agree is nothing but the final outcome itself. They shall not build up their conflict on top of the outcome of the peace process. To achieve a peaceful treaty is not that simple. Global peace has been hindered by many challenges that include both natural and human-made causes. The rationale behind achieving peace is in the positive understanding of "give and take", humanity, forgiveness and nonviolence. The right understanding will take the world in the right path. As an exemplary figure in politics, spirituality and nation building, Gandhi must also be understood rightly. For Gandhi, we are more than the interests which stem from our jobs, status or region. These characteristics, are but incidental to our human nature and if they become the defining characteristics of men and women, the accidental features of our lives become central and most basic and shared elements get lost. Gandhi was well aware of the fact that interests do come from our particular situation in society and because contemporary society both generates inequalities as well as introduces new needs, the solution according to him is to restructure social and economic institutions of society to diminish causes of diverse, contentious interests. In a society patterned on Gandhi's concept of equality, many of the interests which seem so important in highly diversified, hierarchical societies would become less important or

would disappear. The Gandhian way for dealing with interests in or outside democratic societies, interests as much as possible.

5.9 KEY WORDS

Democracy: In practice it means government by the representatives virtually everywhere today, democracy is taken representative system

5.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Analyze Gandhian philosophy of democracy
2. Gandhi's paradigm of Peace

5.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. C.B, Macpherson, The Real World of Democracy, Oxford, Clarendon, Press, 1966,
2. Anthony Arbiaster, Democracy, World View, Delhi 1994,
3. Verma V.P., The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvoday,
4. Ronald J. Terchek: Gandhi and Democratic Theory - Essay in an edited volume Political Thought in Modern Indian, Editors Thomas Pantham and Kenneth L. Deutsch; Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1986

5.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1.

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- Truth, ahimsa social, political and economic justice, communal harmony, tolerance towards the opponents, protection of the minorities are the basic foundations of democratic order.
- Explaining democracy as he conceived it, Gandhi said: "Such a government does not mean the rule of the majority, but protection of the interests of even the smallest limb of the realm."

UNIT 6 - VISION OF NON - VIOLENT SOCIETY

STRUCTURE

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 conflict and violence

6.2.1 Violence direct and indirect

6.2.2 Structural violence

6.2.3 Cultural violence

6.3 Gandhi on structural violence

6.3.1 Preventing structural violence

6.4 Untouchability as Violence

6.5 Let's Sum up

6.6 key words

6.7 Questions for Review

6.8 Suggested Readings

6.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand

- The anatomy of violence- both direct and indirect
- The notion of structural violence
- The importance of these concepts to understand the central ethos of Gandhi's vision of peace and non-violent activism.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi's life and work embodies a unique vision of peace and non-violent activism. He not only abhorred wars and killings under any guise but also addressed the insidious ramifications of indirect violence embedded in the societal structures and cultures. His absolute disavowal of violence amid gravest of provocation makes him the most inveterate proponent of non-violent methods to achieve peace. Peace, he insisted, can only be brought about by the peaceful means. Unsurprisingly, the Gandhian vision led to multiple streams of thinking and action research in contemporary peace and conflict studies. In this Unit, we would take a closer look at some of his ideas, which exemplify his notion of peacebuilding as well, provide range of pedagogical tools to detangle peace studies and conflict analysis. One of the most significant Gandhian insights that has given a new dimension to our understanding of conflict and violence analysis is the notion of Structural Violence which continues to inspire new thinking in the area. Gandhi took a comprehensive view of violence and expanded its scope to include oppressive structures, which erode and damage human dignity and prevent human beings from achieving their full potentials. He included untouchability, racialism, communalism and gender-based discrimination as acts of violence against humanity. The deprivation and impoverishment for him were ready markers of an unjust and violent social order. Conceptualized as 'Structural Violence', this indirect type of violence has been conceptualized lately by the Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung - a pioneer of peace studies. However, it is in the Gandhian thoughts that one finds a quintessential elaboration of structural violence – a fact admitted readily by Galtung himself. The Unit deals at length with Galtung's interpretation.

6.2 CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

What is violence? Is it different from conflict? These queries preface any discussion on the subject. There is an obvious overlap between the two

concepts as conflicts have a propensity to evoke violence. But as such these are two different phenomena. Conflict perse refers to competing social interests or differences or incompatibilities. They can be both functional and dysfunctional. Some conflicts can even spell a positive influence for social change and progress. In fact conflicts, in their different stages, offer ample opportunity to be managed peacefully through a negotiated settlement. Marx saw conflict not only as a matter to be resolved, but also as a driving force of change to new relationships. Gandhi also welcomed conflicts as an opportunity to know and negotiate with one's opponent. Gandhi was emphatic that the generic causes of conflict need to be addressed for its longterm solution.

On the other hand, violence in common parlance stands for war or collective killing, and bloodshed committed by a persona or collectively. Such direct violence is an instantly recognisable form of violence, which creates victims of conflict- through death, injury and psychological damage. Violence has been justified on various grounds including at times, for bringing peace and security. But Gandhi never approved of the use of violence under any circumstances. So he said: 'I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.'

1. Check your Progress

- 1. What is Violence? How is it different from Conflict?

6.2.1 Violence Direct And Indirect

Violence- both direct and indirect- is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15-44 years worldwide, accounting for about 14% of deaths among male and 7% of deaths among female in that age group. Since it is so pervasive, violence is often seen as an inevitable part of the human

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conditions. In popular imagination violence and human aggression seem to run in the human blood. However many scientific studies have discounted this biological linkage. The Seville Statement signed by 22 leading scientists in 1994 has demonstrated that peacefulness is as much intrinsic to human physiology as is the possibility of his acting otherwise.

The following typology of violence is an easy way to show the intend and contend of violence, and its ramifications. What is noteworthy is that both at personal and structural level one can see the same process, causation and expression. Violence undertaken by an actor (person) intentionally or unintentionally falls in the category of direct violence and when such physical or psychological violence is felt due to a structure in a manifest or latent manner, then it is called an indirect violence. As compared to indirect violence, the direct violence is easy to describe. It involves wars, mass killings and other episodes of bloodshed. But if we consider the indirect forms of violence then the loss is unimaginable. By a World Health Organization estimate, such violence results in more than 1.5 million people being killed each year, and many more suffer non-fatal injuries and chronic, noninjury health consequences, and interpersonal violence (domestic violence, child maltreatment, elder abuse and sexual violence). While Gandhi always remained concerned with wars and organized killings and nuclear weapons, he also warned us of those hidden forms of violence, which are more insidious than any other form of direct violence. The Gandhian emphasis on everyday violence ingrained in the very structure of the society paved the way for new thinking in this area. Gandhi defined violence as anything which would impede the individual from self-realization whether by his progress, or by keeping him at a moral standstill. Therefore, the violence of the 'evil-doer' includes its effects in setting the 'evil-doer' back himself; violence can be self-inflicted, and not just inflicted upon others.

Following the Gandhi's lead, Johan Galtung created a violence typology based on a broader understanding of violence. Violence, according to Galtung, is "the avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the

actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible.” Thus in its expanded scope , violence includes not only the intentional use of physical damage but also its threat which might result in injury, death, psychological harm and also in various forms of maldevelopment, deprivation and disempowerment. Such comprehensive vision of violence corresponds closely to Gandhi’s own understanding of violence.

6.2.2 Structural Violence

While the content of structural violence was well amplified by Gandhi in his writings, Johan Galtung, a peace researcher, developed pedagogy around the concept of structural violence which is not inflicted physically on another but is hidden in structures.

Indirect violence, according to Galtung, includes both Structural and Cultural violence. He defined it as a violence that does not hurt or kill through fists or guns or nuclear bombs, but through social structures that produce poverty, death and enormous suffering. Structural violence may be politically repressive, and exploitative; it occurs when the social order directly or indirectly causes human suffering and death. When people starve, for example, even though there’s enough food for everyone, the distribution system is creating structural violence. However, the direct violence is noticed quickly as it injures or kills people instantly and dramatically often resulting in early remedial response.

Galtung argues that violence is built into unequal, unjust and unrepresentative social structures, which produce social groups who have low incomes, low education, low health, and low life expectancy. The human and social costs of this kind of silent, indirect violence are often higher than those of direct physical harm. Such systemic violence denies the larger population from meeting their basic human needs. Racism and untouchability are two stark instances of such structural violence. In both cases the societal, political and economic structures are employed to oppress and exploit the victims of structural violence. Spread of poverty and

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underdevelopment also inflict the humanity with worst kind of violence. Petra Kelly, the founder of the German Green Party, wrote in 1984:

A third of the 2,000 million people in the developing countries are starving or suffering from malnutrition. Twenty-five per cent of their children die before their fifth birthday [...] Less than 10 per cent of the 15 million children who died this year had been vaccinated against the six most common and dangerous children's diseases. Vaccinating every child costs £3 per child. But not doing so costs us five million lives a year. These are classic examples of structural violence.

The episodes of structural violence are less perceptible as they remain embedded in the exploitative, hunger and illness-producing structures. Disempowered and marginalised people suffer and die in silence due to structured inequities- local, regional or may be global. It is easy to correlate the inaccessibility of health care and life-saving systems to unequal and unfair distribution of society's resources.

There is of course a two-way relation between the structural violence and direct violence.

The structured inequalities easily ignite organised armed conflict. Those who are chronically oppressed resort to direct violence, often to seek remedial measures. Most of the ethnic conflicts of recent past were either ignited or exacerbated by the continued disparities and deprivations. Be it Northern Ireland or Sri Lanka or Rwanda – one finds that unabated structural disparities provided justifications for the violent conflict.

The enormous resources consumed by armament and militarisation denies a large chunk of population from meeting their basic human needs for adequate food, health care, and education. The nexus between market forces, arms production and politicians ensure that precious resources in poor countries first go to the buying of arms rather than to alleviate the misery of teeming millions suffering from poverty, hunger and marginalisation. The UNDP Report of 1998 estimated the annual cost to achieve universal access to a number of basic social services in all developing countries: \$9 billion would provide water and sanitation for all; \$12 billion would cover

reproductive health for all women; \$13 billion would give every person on Earth basic health and nutrition; and \$6 billion would provide basic education for all. These social and health expenditures are just a fraction of the annual military budget for the United States alone. Clearly, the unchecked growth of militarism in the world is the single most constraining factor in helping out people in the situation of human insecurity. This has led to a rising discontent in the impoverished and deprived youth in the developing and the less developed countries against the rich, powerful, and the imposing West making them an easy prey to the siren song of extremism.

The globalisation, with its differential character, is further promoting powerful multinational conglomerates that derive huge profits off under-paid laborers in developing countries. The result is horrific structural violence to workers who toil under brutal conditions. It also produces a monoculture, in which people throughout the world learn that the good life consists of convenience products, western dress, and western values of individuality and consumerism. The invisibility of injustice to laborers in the global market economy parallels the invisibility of injustice to indigenous people.

6.2.3 Cultural Violence

The structural violence enforces the powerlessness of its victims, entrenched in the psyche of the society. Galtung, in course, supplemented the notion of structural violence to include the concept of cultural violence. According to him, Cultural Violence describes the ideologies, convictions, traditions and systems of legitimation, through which direct or structural violence is made possible, justified and legitimised.

Violence can be cultural, which occurs when beliefs are used to justify either direct or structural violence. For example, when a person justifies the deaths of starving people by blaming them for their situation (called blaming the victim), that person is engaging in cultural violence. The earlier discussion on structural violence has shown the faultlines in the cultural traditions that permit and even rationalise the violence in its structural forms. In India the

notion of *Karma* assumes that the victims of social inequity must, in some way, deserve their plight. But certainly it is easy to see that young children do not deserve to be victims of structural violence.

Infact the structural inequities, in course, become a part of a powerful cultural mechanism which then legitimises the continuation of such subtle violence. Discriminating cultural and religious beliefs, rituals, art, language and ideologies are constructed to carry on the structural inequities and oppression in a routine manner. Whether it is the theorem of a superior race (Herrenvolk) or the notion of untouchability – all are products of such cultural violence. The theory of cultural violence corresponds closely to the two basic points in Gandhism, the doctrines of unity of life and of unity of means and ends.

6.3 GANDHI ON STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Gandhi's comprehensive approach to non-violence has a close bearing on the contemporary discourse on peace and conflict. Many researchers find his ideas as important to understand the concept of structural violence. Johan Galtung, by his own admission, learned the basics of structural violence through an exploration of Gandhian philosophy during his time at the Gandhian Institute of Studies in Varanasi in 1969. He labelled Gandhi as a 'structuralist' for establishing the distinction between a person and a structure.

Through Gandhian lenses, Galtung saw how violence is built into social structures, and not into the persons. Gandhi intuitively understood the violence perpetrated by oppressive social structures and political institutions. He was unequivocal in saying that the evil was in the structure, not in the person who carried out his obligations. Elsewhere he said that 'the essence of nonviolence technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves.'

Gandhi justifiably found the colonialism as a quintessential case of structural violence. Colonialism, according to Gandhi, was thus an oppressive

structure and so was the caste system within which people acquired their consciousness and performed their assigned duties and roles. In Gandhi's schema, an evil is an offshoot of the social structure. For Gandhi, economics that is destructive of the moral well-being of any individual or nation is immoral, and a political structure bereft of religion and morality cannot bring about the dignity, inner freedom and justice of the citizens. Thus Gandhi highly disapproved of capitalism, not the capitalist; racialism, not the white men; and modern civilisation, not the Western people living in it.

Aware of the systemic imperatives of oppression, Gandhi stated emphatically that the sheer replacement of colonial white regime by brown rulers would not bring any succour to the suffering masses. He was apprehensive that the new rulers would still follow the same objectives, principles and commitment of the 'so called' modern (western) civilisation, which according to him, is founded on the premise of a ruthless competition and unbridled individualism. He said: Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member (Harijan, May 27, 1939).

In his foundational oeuvre, 'Hind Swaraj', he severely condemned the 'modern civilization' which corrodes the dignity and the soul of human beings. According to Gandhi, the unbridled quest of human consumption, wants, and addiction to technological solutions, would further divide the society and inflict psychological damage to the underprivileged sections of the society. Gandhi found the practices of modern civilization ruthless and aggressive which puts a premium on ambitious, competitive, tough men whose only mission is to maximize their wealth and power. The blind pursuance of modernity tends to undermine the shared bonds of a true community and indulges in structural violence often in tandem with an oppressive state.

6.3.1 Preventing Structural Violence

Gandhi wanted to demolish such norms and institutions that justify discrimination, exploitation and dehumanisation. No wonder that his notion of non-violent activism far exceeds the narrow understanding of violence confined to direct injuries and bloodshed. In fact Gandhi's Ahimsa focused as much on the system-generated structural violence as on actor-oriented direct violence.

The Gandhian vision on structural violence has found greater relevance in recent times. While the episodes of direct violence between the states have diminished, there is an unprecedented surge of civilian violence – people killing their fellow beings and violence perpetrated by the state against its own citizens. The violence against the weaker sections has also increased whether it is against the women or against other ethnic, caste or communities. In India the growth of naxalism is often attributed to the long drawn exploitation, oppression and dehumanisation of the tribals in a systemic manner. Gandhi did not approve of the modern territorial state as a panacea to end the structural violence for the same reasons he discounted the modern civilisation. His ideal of social organisation was the family which could encompass the whole world (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*). Gandhi's non-violent activism was based on a social order in which there is no dehumanisation and each one is treated with dignity in the spirit of shared humanity. In his ideal society, free from structural violence, he visualised that people would be content to fulfill their basic human needs and would not hanker for more. In a much-cited speech he said:

If I take anything that I do not need for my immediate use, and keep it, I thief it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality, so long we are thieving.¹

Clearly then Gandhi highlighted the norm of shared responsibility and accorded the community of ensuring the fulfillment of each one's basic human needs. He chided those who craved for the surplus at the cost of depriving others of meeting their basic human needs.

As mentioned earlier, Gandhi feared that colonialism not only engages in political and economic exploitation but also fabricates a cultural mindset conducive to subjugate its targets. He apprehended that the philosophical and moral worldview of the colonisers would persist despite India achieving its independence.

Gandhi's epic treatise 'Hind Swaraj' is in fact a critique of structures and cultures that persist in Structural Violence. He wanted new structures and norms to replace the colonial legacy in independent India and doubted how the elite steeped in the western culture can do so. He was opposed to the usurping and abusing of political power by a few authorities. He instead called for the capacity-building of the masses so that a truly representative democracy could emerge.

Unless there is a total shift in the way we look at the concept of progress and development, India will witness greater intensity of structural and cultural violence. To rid India from the structural and cultural violence, the Gandhian precepts of Swaraj and *Swadeshi* offered ways to liberate our people from systemic violence. Realising that structural violence is ingrained in the profit-seeking capitalist world, Gandhi's non-violent social order entailed limiting the consumption as well as such new technology, which promotes exploitation, inequity, centralization of power and authority. Gandhi had an innate sympathy for the poor and deprived. He believed that capitalism is an economic order and had roots of all exploitation. The relentless pursuit of profit led to discrimination, oppression and exploitation. There is always enough in this world to meet the basic human needs of its people. The misery of poverty and deprivation arise because of the possessive individual who thrives on the labor put in by others. Only if people could take from the system only as much as they need, then there will be an end to misery and violence that it entails. 'In this country of semi-

starvation of millions and inefficient nutrition,” Gandhi said, “the wearing of jewelry is an offense to the eyes.”

Gandhi therefore talked about self-sufficient village and indigenous mode of development. Gandhi visualised the philosophy of Sarvodaya to usher in economic equity reaching down to the last and the least without ruthless compulsion and violence. His answer to structural violence was thus Ahimsa and Sarvodaya. While Ahimsa would heal, Sarvodaya would spell the sense of unity, a ‘oneness’ among all without any distinction, high and low, rich and poor, strong and weak, even the good and the bad.

2. Check your Progress

1. Give some examples of Structural Violence.

6.4 UNTOUCHABILITY AS VIOLENCE

Gandhi found untouchability as the blatant case of structural violence and a worst crime against humanity. The question of eliminating untouchability to him was more critical than even the quest of political independence. So he wrote in ‘Young India’ as early as in 1921 that “Swaraj is a meaningless term if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection... Inhuman ourselves we may not plead before the Throne for the deliverance from the inhumanity of others.” Again in 1928 Gandhi declared untouchability as an “inhuman boycott of human beings” and thought that its removal was a prerequisite for the attainment of home-rule. Gandhi not only reclaimed the dignity of untouchables by renaming them as Harijans - ‘God’s children’ but also integrated them in his personal life and work. He himself started cleaning the public toilets along with the Harijans to set an example.

Gandhi was highly grieved not only among Hindu untouchables, but also among Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and all other different religions about the caste system and found it to be a social evil, but untouchability to him was a sin.

Gandhi worked relentlessly to elevate the social status of the untouchables in India. He wanted penance for crimes of discrimination that have been perpetuated for thousands of years as he wanted society to work hard to relocate the untouchables on an equal footing with the other members of society.

Gandhi went on a fast until death after the proclamation of the elections based on communal identity in 1935. He could not tolerate the non-accommodation of the untouchables within the fold of the Hindu community. Gandhi was instrumental to a great degree to make the Indians conscious of the evils of untouchability. In an attempt to persuade the orthodox Hindus to wipe out the “blight of untouchability”, Gandhi undertook fast in the summer of 1933 for three weeks. To him his battle against untouchability related to the larger question of unity communities.

An account of Gandhi's theory of Truth necessarily takes us to the consideration of his views on the nature of Non-violence. Gandhi himself says, “I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scales air I could. In doing so I have sometimes erred and learnt by my errors. Life and its problems have thus become to me so many experiments in the practice of truth and non-violence. In fact it was in the course of my pursuit of truth that I discovered nonviolence. Explaining more clearly the transition from the notion of Truth to that of Non-violence lie says, “Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which the reverse? Ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.”

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Not that Gandhi is using this word in some special sense which is entirely different from its traditional or customary sense, but, Gandhi has emphasised certain aspects of Ahimsa which have not been given that importance by any other believer in Ahimsa. On account of such emphasis there has emerged a Gandhian sense of the word, which, although similar to its usual sense, has some distinctive features of its own.

In Gandhi the word Ahimsa has both a negative and a positive import. The positive aspect of its meaning is more fundamental for Gandhi, because it comprehends the negative aspect also and represents its essence.

The usual meaning of Ahimsa is non-killing. Most often its meaning is made broader by emphasizing that non-killing is merely one example of Ahimsa. Ahimsa then is conceived as non-injury. In any case, Ahimsa is conceived as the opposite of himsa. Gandhi accepts this and adds much more to its content. He also accepts that himsa means causing pain or killing any life out of anger, or from a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it. Refraining from doing all this is Ahimsa. In fact in conceiving Ahimsa thus Gandhi seems to be influenced by Jainism which recommends the practice of Ahimsa in thought, speech and action. According to it, even thinking ill of others is himsa. Not only this, Jainism demands that one should not only commit himsa himself, he should not cause himsa or permit himsa to take place. Gandhi's negative requirements of Ahimsa are not as rigid as that, because Gandhi is aware that it is not possible to observe non-violence in as strict and rigid manner as Jainism demands. He is aware that in certain cases himsa is unavoidable, as for example, in the processes of eating, drinking, walking, breathing etc. It is impossible to sustain one's body without injuring other bodies to some extent. Gandhi in fact, openly recommends killing under certain circumstances.

He says, "Taking life may be a duty. We do destroy as much life as we think necessary for sustaining our body. Thus, for food we take life, vegetable and other, and for health we destroy mosquitoes and the like by the use of disinfectants etc., and we do not think that we are guilty of irreligion in doing so for the benefit of the species we kill carnivorous beasts

even man -slaughter may be necessary in certain cases. Suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, and killing anyone that comes in his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Anyone who despatches this lunatic, will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded as a benevolent man, He makes this point still clearer when he says, "I see that there is an instinctive horror of killing living beings under any circumstances whatever. For instance, an alternative has been suggested in the shape of confining even rabid dogs in a certain place and allow them to die a slow death. Now my idea of compassion makes this thing impossible for me. I can not for a moment bear to see a dog or for that matter any other living being, helplessly suffering the torture of a slow death. I do not kill a human being thus circumstanced because I have more hopeful remedies. I should kill a dog similarly situated, because in its case, I am without a remedy. Should my child be attacked with rabbies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony, I should consider it my duty to take his life. Fatalism has its limits. We leave things to Fate after exhausting all the remedies. One of the remedies and the final one to relieve the agony of a tortured child is to take his life. Thus, it is apparent that Gandhi considers it almost a virtue to take life under certain conditions. In fact, he feels that under conditions similar to the examples given by him, continuing to live itself is pain and that, therefore, non-killing amounts to prolonging pain and agony. Thus, Non-injury itself has been conceived in a slightly different manner by Gandhi.

He is of the opinion that killing or injury to life can be an act of violence only under certain conditions. These conditions are anger, pride, hatred, selfish consideration, bad intention and similar other considerations. Any injury to life done under these motives is himsa. Thus, the negative meaning of Ahimsa is non-killing or non-injury' but this presupposes that nonviolent act is free from hatred, anger, malice and the like.

But, for Gandhi, the positive aspects of Ahimsa are much more basic than its negative characters. - Ahimsa is not merely refraining from causing

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injuries to creature, it stands for certain positive attitudes towards other living beings that one must cultivate.

In working out the positive principles of Ahimsa Gandhi proceeds under a basic conviction, namely that Ahimsa represents one of the basic and essential qualities of mankind. That does not mean that violence does not have any place in life. In fact, even in preserving one's existence one has to commit himsa of one kind or the other, and yet Ahimsa is considered to be the law of our species. This is apparent from the fact that even when violence appears to do some good, the good that results is very temporary. Nothing permanent can be built on violence. History teaches us that those who have, even with sincere and honest motives, ousted the greedy and the dishonest by using brute force against them, have, in their turn, become a prey to those very evil things with which the dishonest persons had suffered.

This particular belief of Gandhi is expressed in his oft-quoted assertion that Ahimsa is natural to man. He illustrates this in various ways. If we survey the course of evolution we shall find that although in the initial stages brute force appeared to be dominant, the progress of evolution is towards Ahimsa. In fact, in the case of every species it can be seen that no animal or creature eats or devours or destroys its own offsprings. In the case of man, in particular, this fact is still more evident. Man is both body and spirit. Body can represent physical power and therefore can, on occasions, do himsa; but man's true nature consists in his spiritual aspects. Man as spirit is essentially nonviolent. A simple evidence of this is the fact that while body or the senses can be injured, the soul can never be injured. Himsa, therefore, is alien to man's nature. The moment the spiritual side of man is awakened, his non-violent nature becomes apparent. In fact, in its positive aspect Ahimsa is nothing but Love. Love is a kind of feeling of oneness. In an act of love one identifies himself with the object of his love, and this cannot be possible unless there is an effort to free mind from every such disposition that prevents the spontaneous outflow of Love.

Therefore, Ahimsa demands a sincere effort to free mind from feelings like anger, malice, hatred, revenge, jealousy etc., because these

create obstacles in the way of Love. Love, according to Gandhi, is the 'energy that cleanses one's inner life and uplifts him, and as such, love comprehends such noble feelings as benevolence, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, generosity, kindness, sympathy etc.

To love, of course, is a very difficult discipline. It is easy to hate, but it requires supreme energy and strength to love. The task becomes still more difficult when one is required to love a person who is ordinarily to be regarded as an opponent. Therefore, Gandhi says that non-violence is meant for the strong and not for the weak. This can be demonstrated in a very simple manner. Gandhi believes that violence is essentially an expression of weakness. One who is inwardly weak develops a sort of a fear and -out of fear starts arming himself against real or imaginary enemies. Violence may have the appearance of strength, but it is born out of fear and is, therefore, a sign of weakness. Only he can be truly non-violent who has conquered fear. The capacity to kill is not a sign of strength, the strength to die is the real strength. Only when one has this strength in him that he can claim to have risen above fear and is able to Practice non-violence. "A helpless mouse is not non-violent because he is always eaten by the pussy. He would gladly eat the murderess if he could. In fact, "Non-violence pre-supposes the ability to strike." One who is practising Ahimsa has the strength to overpower his adversary, and still he Practice: ahimsa because ahimsa is a conscious and deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. In fact, the really strong wins not by brute force, but by fearless love. "Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. It means pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire."

Non-violence again is conceived as a gospel of action. It is not an attitude of indifference or passivity. It is true that the seeds of non-violence the deep down in the heart, but they are expressed and given shape in actions. Therefore, Non-violence is a dynamic process involving continuous and persistent, deliberations, efforts, strains and actions. It is true that non-

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violence requires extreme patience on the part of one who is using this method, but this patience is not a sign of inactivity, it is an expression of a conscious and inner effort to force the so called opponent to see and realize his own mistake.

This is why it is said that non-violence involves sacrifice and suffering. Sacrifice, according to Gandhi, is an indispensable companion of Love. Love demands a going beyond, a self-transcendence. Only he can love who is selfless, who only believes in "giving" and not in taking. Gandhi says, "Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges it elf." This is self-sacrifice and this involves suffering. "The test of love is tapasya and tapasya is self-suffering." Gandhi feels that suffering is the surest way of getting victory in the battles of life. If we quietly suffer we give time to the opponent for his anger to calm down. He will then come to realize his mistake. Of course one presupposition of conscious suffering is that there must be a 'love' for even the opponent and also a faith in the essential goodness present in him. Without this suffering would be in vain. That is why suffering is conceived as an aspect of Love. The essence of love, according to Gandhi is not enjoyment, it is suffering.

Gandhi also feels that non-violence conceived as love and conscious suffering can give full protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour. In fact, the non-violent man does not bend, it is the opponent who has to bend. He, infact, Practices forgiveness in the maximum degree, and in the process the opponent is almost put to shame.

It is the firm conviction of Gandhi that Ahimsa can be Practiced universally. It is a power which can be wielded equally by all-children, young men and women or grown up people of all places and times. It does not involve the use of any external object, it only demands a sincerity of purpose and a purity of intentions, and as such, it-can be Practiced by everybody even by societies or nations.

But there is one supreme condition attached to the practice of Ahimsa. It cannot be Practiced unless one has a living and unflinching faith in God. The practice of Ahimsa requires an inner strength, which can only

be generated by a living-faith in God. A sincere faith in God will make man see that all human beings are fellow-beings and essentially one. Thus, the love of God would turn into a love of humanity, which alone can make possible the practice of Ahimsa. It is as a result of the realization of the unity of mankind that one will be able to love his fellow-beings. Faith in God, therefore, is the most fundamental condition for the practice of Ahimsa.

6.5 LETS SUM UP

The concept of Structural violence expands the scope of violence from inflicting direct physical damage to a range of situations which disallows humans to attain their full potentials in terms of actual somatic and mental realisation. By bringing out this indirect and subtle nature of violence, Gandhi brings on board the misery of teeming millions who suffer in silence inflicted by the oppressive structures. Gandhi was upfront in declaring that any division in society would lead to inequality and which in turn would lead to violence. He also emphasised that poverty and deprivation are the most widespread manifestations of structural violence. And unless these exploitative structures are dismantled, there would be no sustainable peace. This conceptual expansion has endowed peace and conflict studies greater insights into the generic causes of violent conflicts. Many recent initiatives like human development and human security have highlighted the core issues of Structural Violence. Thus human security is defined as freedom from fear and freedom from want, which include safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repressions, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life.

The responsibility of eliminating structural violence eventually rests on the concerted efforts to promote political and economic institutions which consider the fulfillment of basic human needs as their primary goal. Many imperatives, which according to Gandhi, violated human dignity are now being attended within the ambit of human security and human development including increasing poverty reduction programmes, support for women's

education, health, and family welfare; sustained efforts to use forests, water, and soils which support rural economies; and measures to ensure effective citizenship.

Gandhi also spells out the ways to mitigate structural violence. While his vision of *Ahimsa* heals, the human governance as conceived in *Swaraj* alleviates and eventually eliminates its effects. He calls for deep reforms in the way we define and organise development and governance. Gandhi was skeptic about the state's intention and capacity to deal with core issues of structural violence and exhorted the civil society to take the lead in understanding and eliminating the curse of oppressive structures. Gandhi was also emphatic that it is only by redressing the malefic effects of structural violence which impact the majority of people that India could grow as a healthy and happy nation.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Vasudev Kutumbakam : Whole world as a family

6.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Differentiate between Direct and Indirect Violence.
2. Define Structural Violence. What are its main features?
3. . How did Gandhi inspire the thinking on Structural Violence?
4. . How, according to Gandhi, can Structural Violence impact poor and powerless?

6.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Answer to Check your Progress

- Conflict per se refers to competing social interests or differences or incompatibilities. They can be both functional and dysfunctional. Some conflicts can even spell a positive influence for social change and progress.

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- On the other hand, violence in common parlance stands for war or collective killing, and bloodshed committed by a person or collectively. Such direct violence is an instantly recognisable form of violence, which creates victims of conflict- through death, injury and psychological damage. Violence has been justified on various grounds including at times, for bringing peace and security.

2. Answer to Check your Progress

- The structural violence enforces the powerlessness of its victims, entrenched in the psyche of the society.
- Galtung, in course, supplemented the notion of structural violence to include the concept of cultural violence.
- According to him, Cultural Violence describes the ideologies, convictions, traditions and systems of legitimation, through which direct or structural violence is made possible, justified and legitimised.

UNIT 7 SWARAJ

STRUCTURE

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 The State and the Individual

7.2.1 Decentralization

7.3 Ideal State and Sarvodaya

7.4 Education

7.5 Political Freedom: Swaraj

7.6 Decentralization

7.7 Ideal State and Swarajya

7.8 Let's Sum up

7.9 Key Words

7.10 Questions for review

7.11 Suggested Readings

7.12 Answer to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Learn about key features of Swaraj
- Understand Relation between Swaraj and Sarvodaya

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Gandhi admits that for the realization of the ideal state political freedom is one of the essential preconditions. That was why he had launched a non-violent struggle in order to gain political freedom for India. The word that he prefers to use for political freedom is swaraj. Traditionally this word has

come to mean 'own Government or self-rule', but Gandhi uses this word in a much profounder sense. His meaning of swaraj includes its usual meaning and adds something more. He says, "As every country is free to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation free to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly." Along with this he further extends the meaning of swaraj by saying that the sense of swaraj must be felt and realized by every individual of the state. According to him there is a difference between mere independence and swaraj. If a country gets self-rule and the few powerful ones take up everything in their own hands and neglect the poor masses, it is not the Swaraj of Gandhi's dream. He takes particular care to emphasise this. He says, "The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by princes and monied men." "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction Swaraj is to be for all" "I hope to demonstrate that the real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority, when abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." These self-explanatory extracts from Gandhi's writings make it abundantly clear that real Swaraj means that every individual should have a feeling of freedom. In fact, the ultimate aim of every activity, according to Gandhi, is the realization of spiritual freedom. Swaraj is a step towards it, because it enables an individual to realize at least political freedom.

7.2 THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The idea of political freedom raises the question regarding the relation between the state and the individual. This problem has become very important in the recent times in view of the fact that sociological theories have started emphasising the primacy of community and have started saying that the individual apart from the community does not have any value. Gandhi, without undermining the importance of the society and the state, assigns to the individual also a very important place. In fact, he feels that

the individual, in a sense, is more basic than the society or the state, not only because he is prior to society and the state, but also because he is the unit around which social and political organizations are built.

Gandhi feels that no progress or growth can ever be possible unless the individual is allowed to grow. The state derives its existence and strength from individuals, and therefore, it is the function of the state to see that sufficient scope is created for security, peace and all round development of the individual. Gandhi suspects that even self-rule may, by its acts of omissions and discrimination, may prevent the growth of individuals. For Gandhi the highest goal of life is moral; conscience or ethical consciousness has to be developed in all individuals. Therefore, no nation can hope to prosper unless all its individuals are morally pure. The state should see that the individuality of the individual is not sacrificed at the altar of the whims of those few who lead the government.

In fact, Gandhi recommends that it is one of the supreme duties of an individual to exercise moral pressure on the state by the method of non-violent non-co-operation whenever the state is found indulging in acts of exploitation and discrimination. Gandhi seems to be convinced that even a single individual can force the might of a nation to bow down before its moral strength.

This description of the relation between the state and the individual should not lead one to suppose that Gandhi, as against the Communists, is through and through in favour of the supremacy of the individual. His emphasis is on moral purity. Morality originates in self-sacrifice, therefore, a purely moral individual will not be selfish and individualistic. He will recognise his duties, he will know that the existence of the state depends upon the mutual co-operation of individuals. According to Gandhi, the allegiance to the state is based on a sincere dependence on the moral sense. Therefore, in a state the individual should not talk of his rights, he should talk about his duties.

In fact, according to Gandhi, the relation between the state and the individual is one of co-operation and non-co-operation it is co-operation with the laws of the state so long as the state seeks to move along moral

lines, but it is non-co-operation with the laws of the state if the laws are against the rules of ethics.

1. Answer to Check your Progress

1. Relation between state and individual

7.2.1 Decentralization

If the relation between the state and the individual is to be such that individual's initiative is to be promoted, then it is obvious that power should not be centralized in the state. Centralization of capital or power, according to Gandhi, would lead to exploitation. Moreover, centralization cannot be maintained or defended without resorting to force or violence. Centralization leads to concentration of power and capital in a few hands, and therefore, there emerges the possibility of its misuse. On account of all these reasons, but chiefly on account of his conviction that individual liberty and initiative alone can pave the way to progress, Gandhi recommends Decentralization as a necessary political measure.

But then, this means that this process has to be carried to its maximum limit. Therefore, Gandhi recommends, what can be called, a village republic as the ideal form of decentralized political and social system. He says that the ideal system which can give maximum opportunity for individual initiative and growth is the Panchayat System having self-contained villages based primarily on agriculture and cottage industry. This system presupposes voluntary co-operation on the part of every individual. "In this structure composed of innumerable villages life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."

7.3 IDEAL STATE AND SARVODAYA

Gandhi has tried to analyse and determine carefully the outline or the salient features of the ideal Government that he wishes the state to have. In fact, he feels that our aim should be to concentrate on the means for bringing about a good, peaceful and happy state in which every individual would be able to get equal opportunities and comforts, but he does not want to enter into the details of the forms of that ideal state. He is aware that during the recent times so many 'isms' and so many names of possible forms of government have become current that it is unwise and unnecessary waste of time to try to enter into the controversy regarding the nature of the ideal state.

Gandhi's idea of the ideal state is the idea of the village Republic. We have seen that he favours a system of self-contained villages. He thinks that in the representative form of government there is the likelihood of individuals and small villages being ignored and neglected. A country is a big thing, it extends over a very large area, and so, it is not possible for the centralised form of government to do justice to and to keep sustained interest in small, remote and far-off areas. The best way out, then, is to make villages autonomous at least for things necessary for day to day existence. Every village should be self-contained at least with respect to daily necessities of life, like food, clothing, basic education, health, sanitation and similar other things. Even this system can have a Panchayat for smooth and effective running of things. But, the primary aim of Panchayat also should not be legislation of laws. Legislation should be resorted to only when necessary. The normal basis of this Panchayat type of government has to be a moral one. The village republic must be based on strict moral sense and a feeling of mutual co-operation. This system will be the system of perfect democracy because this would ensure complete individual liberty and will promote individual initiative. It will be a state based on love trust, non-violence and a keenly developed moral sense. This will have the additional advantage of taking away the very root of rivalry and fight, because in such

a system, no panchayat can afford to have any surplus wealth or power. Naturally, there will not remain any reason for lust or greed and consequently life will be more peaceful, and there will remain no scope for exploitation of any kind.

In fact, in conceiving this form of the socio-political set up Gandhi is moved by the considerations of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya etymologically means the betterment of all and that precisely it is. Usually Sarvodaya is compared and contrasted with Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is the doctrine that believes in the greatest good of the greatest number. But, Sarvodaya is more comprehensive and more altruistic than Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is after all a hedonistic doctrine, its standard somehow is pleasure. Moreover, it is ultimately based on considerations that are selfish., it is ultimately for the good of oneself that others are taken into consideration. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, is based on 'love', it proceeds on the faith that a sarvodaya will also be prepared for maximum possible self-sacrifice for the good of others. The end of all activities, social or political, has to be nothing else but the upliftment of everybody. This can be possible only when, no individual is neglected or overlooked, and this, in its turn, will be possible only in the panchayat system, which, through its small village units will be able to pay attention to every individual of the village.

Utilitarianism, again, is essentially limited in its scope. There cannot be a really universal philosophy of Utilitarianism because the talk of utility itself precludes the possibility of its universality. It necessarily has a reference to particular societies. Thus, what may be considered to be utilitarian for one society may not be so for another. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, is based on the belief that there is an essential unity behind everything. The forces of disruption that create distinctions between "I" and "Thou" are all rooted in selfish considerations, whereas the realization of oneness is the supreme condition for the effective following of ethical principles. The system of village republic is based on such a consideration. It is true that a perfect realization of oneness is not possible in this life, but true spiritual life consists not in attaining the ideal, but in constantly striving and aspiring for it. The life in the village republic will be an example of such a spiritual

living because every man of a Panchayat will have a bond of affection for every other, and consequently will not develop a sense of having a possession. Even land will be considered as belonging to everybody. Gandhi says, “Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught, all land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it. Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the state, i.e. the People”

In a state like this police, military, and courts of Justice will have a character different from the one they have in the present day states. In fact, Gandhi feels that in a completely non-violent society there should not be any need of the present type of police or military or law-courts. But it is not possible to have a completely non-violent society all at once. Therefore, so long as imperfections and immorality remain, police and law-courts would be needed. But, Gandhi says that their character and pattern should be different they should not consider themselves to be the masters of the people, they should be real servants of society dedicated to the task of reforming the wrong-doer. In fact, Gandhi feels that in a state of his conception there would not be much problem, because the possibility of crime will automatically go down. Whatever little acts of crime would be committed would be tackled with love. He is convinced that such a police would get spontaneous help from the people. Likewise, military should also be engaged in promoting the ways of non-violence. Use of arms would not be normally permitted, even the aggressor can be met with an army of satyagrahis. But so long as people are not reformed, police and military in their usual senses will have to be retained. He feelingly says, “Alas! in my Swaraj of today, there is room for soldiers.” “I agree too that a sudden withdrawal of the military and the police will be a disaster if we have not acquired the ability to protect ourselves against robbers and thieves.”

7.4 EDUCATION

As Gandhian political system is based on the consideration that there is an element of goodness essentially present in every man, there is the need

of a proper education which would be able to bring out this element of goodness. The state has to prepare individuals for the village-republic, or for making possible the emergence of the ideal government. Therefore, individuals have to be trained and educated in such a manner that the ideal is reached conveniently. Therefore, the goal of education, according to Gandhi, should be moral education or character-building and the cultivation of a conviction that one should forget everything selfish in working towards great aims.

Therefore, Gandhi defines education in this way, “By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit.” “I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose etc. In other words an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. Proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

Thus, Gandhi is not in favour of the present-day system of education that is prevalent in India. Such an education merely imparts instructions, or makes man literate, but literacy is not education. Every individual is born with certain basic and in born tendencies and capacities. The aim of education should be to bring out such inherent capacities of every individual. This would be possible only when theoretical imparting of instruction is combined with practical training. Gandhi, like Dewey, perceives the value of learning by doing, and therefore recommends that education should begin with the learning of some crafts like: carpentry, poultry, spinning, weaving or any other similar handicraft. By actually doing manual work while learning, the individual will develop interest in his

work and will be able to give out his best. This is what is known as Basic Education. In this type of education the child is taught how to manipulate things by actually allowing him to do the thing himself. He comes to learn why a thing is done in a particular way and not in a different way. One advantage of this system would be that unlike the present-day prevalent system of education, the individual will find that the things that he learns are of actual use in life. That is why Gandhi is completely dissatisfied with the higher education that is imparted today in Indian universities. A scholar, after completing his studies, enters into the life-field only to find that there is absolutely no relation between what he had learnt and what he has to do. Therefore, he says, we have up to now concentrated on stuffing children's minds with all kinds of information, without ever thinking of stimulating and developing them. Let us now cry a halt and concentrate on educating the child properly through manual work, not as side activity, but as the prime means of intellectual training. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another, round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artist sense, and so on. He will be the master of craft he learns.”

There is yet another advantage of this kind of education this kind of education will become the spearhead of a silent social revolution. It will bring the city-life and village-life closer, and thus will eradicate the evil of class-difference. It will prevent the decay of village-culture and the lust for city-life, and thus will lay the foundation of a just social order giving equal opportunity and initiative to every individual. Moreover, as this system will make individuals skilled in their own arts, they will be masters of their own destiny, and will not become the object of exploitation of the privileged people. That is why Gandhi conceives Basic Education as having far-reaching consequences.

7.5 POLITICAL FREEDOM: SWARAJ

Gandhi admits that for the realization of the ideal state political freedom is one of the essential preconditions. That was why he had launched a non-

violent struggle in order to gain political freedom for India. The word that he prefers to use for political freedom is swaraj. Traditionally this word has come to mean 'own Government or self-rule', but Gandhi uses this word in a much profounder sense. His meaning of swaraj includes its usual meaning and adds something more. He says, "As every country is free to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation free to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly." Along with this he further extends the meaning of swaraj by saying that the sense of swaraj must be felt and realized by every individual of the state. According to him there is a difference between independence and swaraj. If a country gets self-rule and the few powerful ones take up everything in their own hands and neglect the poor masses, it is not the Swaraj of Gandhi's dream. He takes particular care to emphasise this. He says, "The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by princes and monied men." "The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinction Swaraj is to be for all" "I hope to demonstrate that the real swaraj will come not by, the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority, when abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." These self-explanatory extracts from Gandhi's writings make it abundantly clear that real Swaraj means that every individual should have a feeling of freedom. In fact, the ultimate aim of every activity, according to Gandhi, is the realization of spiritual freedom. Swaraj is a step towards it, because it enables an individual to realize at least political freedom.

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because he is prior to society and the state, but also because he is the unit around which social and political organizations are built.

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In fact, according to Gandhi, the relation between the state and the individual is one of co-operation and non-co-operation it is co-operation with the laws of the state so long as the state seeks to move along moral

lines, but it is non-co-operation with the laws of the state if the laws are against the rules of ethics.

Gandhi's conception of *Swaraj* is different to the one that is articulated by the Western Marxists, socialists or even the liberals though he assimilates their ideas. He is an ardent individualist like the liberals but his ideal is maximising individual freedom by promoting common good. Philosophically, like the anarchists, his ideal remains a society where the state plays a minimal role but he shuns their stress on revolutionary violence. Like the Marxists and socialists he desires an egalitarian society but opposes their deterministic view of history and human nature. Yet he is certain that reform would have come from within India. He desires, like Burke, to retain India's ancient heritage and modernising whatever is worth salvaging and useful. He is an anarchist, a liberal, a socialist and a conservative and yet none of these for, he never lost his profoundly revolutionary character (Bondurant, 1967, p.3). He is essentially concerned with contemporary problems and tries to find solutions that are both desirable and feasible.

Gandhi defies classification as the prophet of bourgeois nationalism in India. First, the means that he employed "are such that they will successfully end only if the masses become selfacting towards the latter part of the revolution, and the chances are that if the masses gain success through their fully developed conscious strength, they will also refuse to be exploited in future by anybody who wishes to ride upon their back. Second, Gandhi did not want India to benefit at the expense of any other nation. He considered humanity as one family. Because of this Gandhi transcended bourgeois nationalism" (Bose, 1947, pp.21-22).

This autonomous development of Gandhi's ideas represents the fullest expression of the indigenous roots of modern Indian political speculation. From Rammohan to Vivekananda, the quest has been for assimilation of the Western ideas and culture with that of the East. In the twentieth century, Tagore and M. N. Roy, along with Gandhi, portray an autonomous evolution of political discourse. All three, rooted in the Western experience, attempt to transcend it by initiating a discourse that is closer to the Indian reality.

Tagore denounces the Western cult of nationalism by emphasising universality. Roy's participatory democracy is an attempt to go beyond both liberal representative democracy and authoritarian centralized communism. Gandhi uses Western concepts and ideals to critically dissect the shortcomings of India but the reconstruction of India is quintessentially Indian. Gandhi provides a comprehensive critique of Western modernity and modernisation by contesting the assumptions and conclusions of a self-confident orientalism, particularly its views about the inferiority of the East and the superiority of the modernity of the West. At the same time he rejects readings of Hinduism as inherently fatalistic and passive and seeks to recover robust conception of autonomy and action in his tradition. To analyse Gandhi's role in Indian transformation realistically one has to take his role as a social critic seriously. His dissection of the causes of disparity in the Indian situation led him to two conclusions: (1) imperialistic exploitation and (2) limitation of the capitalist industrialised civilisation of the west. His solution to this is in "a kind of democracy... where the gulf between the rich and the poor was not so marked, where the evils of the great cities were absent and people lived in contact with the life-giving soil and breathed the pure air of the open spaces" (Nehru, 1965, p.111). His vision of India is one "in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony".

7.6 DECENTRALIZATION

If the relation between the state and the individual is to be such that individual's initiative is to be promoted, then it is obvious that power should not be centralised in the state. Centralization of capital or power, according to Gandhi, would lead to exploitation. Moreover, centralization cannot be maintained or defended without resorting to force or violence. Centralization leads to concentration of power and capital in a few hands, and therefore, there emerges the possibility of its misuse. On account of all these reasons,

but chiefly on account of his conviction that individual liberty and initiative alone can pave the way to progress, Gandhi recommends Decentralization as a necessary political measure.

But then, this means that this process has to be carried to its maximum limit. Therefore, Gandhi recommends, what can be called, a village republic as the ideal form of decentralised political and social system. He says that the ideal system which can give maximum opportunity for individual initiative and growth is the Panchayat System having self-contained villages based primarily on agriculture and cottage industry. This system presupposes voluntary co-operation on the part of every individual. “In this structure composed of innumerable villages life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it.”

7.7 IDEAL STATE AND SARVODAYA

Gandhi has tried to analyse and determine carefully the outline or the salient features of the ideal Government that he wishes the state to have. In fact, he feels that our aim should be to concentrate on the means for bringing about a good, peaceful and happy state in which every individual would be able to get equal opportunities and comforts, but he does not want to enter into the details of the forms of that ideal state. He is aware that during the recent times so many 'isms' and so many names of possible forms of government have become current that it is unwise and unnecessary waste of time to try to enter into the controversy regarding the nature of the ideal state.

Gandhi's idea of the ideal state is the idea of the village Republic. We have seen that he favours a system of self-contained villages. He thinks that in the representative form of government there is the likelihood of individuals and small villages being ignored and neglected. A country is a

big thing, it extends over a very large area, and so, it is not possible for the centralised form of government to do justice to and to keep sustained interest in small, remote and far-off areas. The best way out, then, is to make villages autonomous at least for things necessary for day to day existence. Every village should be self-contained at least with respect to daily necessities of life, like food, clothing, basic education, health, sanitation and similar other things. Even this system can have a Panchayat for smooth and effective running of things. But, the primary aim of Panchayat also should not be legislation of laws. Legislation should be resorted to only when necessary. The normal basis of this Panchayat type of government has to be a moral one. The village republic must be based on strict moral sense and a feeling of mutual co-operation. This system will be the system of perfect democracy because this would ensure complete individual liberty and will promote individual initiative. It will be a state based on love trust, non-violence and a keenly developed moral sense. This will have the additional advantage of taking away the very root of rivalry and fight, because in such a system, no panchayat can afford to have any surplus wealth or power. Naturally, there will not remain any reason for lust or greed and consequently life will be more peaceful, and there will remain no scope for exploitation of any kind.

In fact, in conceiving this form of the socio-political set up Gandhi is moved by the considerations of Sarvodaya. Sarvodaya etymologically means the betterment of all and that precisely it is. Usually Sarvodaya is compared and contrasted with Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is the doctrine that believes in the greatest good of the greatest number. But, Sarvodaya is more comprehensive and more altruistic than Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is after all a hedonistic doctrine, its standard somehow is pleasure. Moreover, it is ultimately based on considerations that are selfish., it is ultimately for the good of oneself that others are taken into consideration. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, is based on 'love', it proceeds on the faith that a sarvodaya will also be prepared for maximum possible self-sacrifice for the good of others. The end of all activities, social or political, has to be nothing else but the upliftment of everybody. This can be possible only when, no individual is

neglected or overlooked, and this, in its turn, will be possible only in the panchayat system, which, through its small village units will be able to pay attention to every individual of the village.

Utilitarianism, again, is essentially limited in its scope. There cannot be a really universal philosophy of Utilitarianism because the talk of utility itself precludes the possibility of its universality. It necessarily has a reference to particular societies. Thus, what may be considered to be utilitarian for one society may not be so for another. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, is based on the belief that there is an essential unity behind everything. The forces of disruption that create distinctions between “I” and “Thou” are all rooted in selfish considerations, whereas the realization of oneness is the supreme condition for the effective following of ethical principles. The system of village republic is based on such a consideration. It is true that a perfect realization of oneness is not possible in this life, but true spiritual life consists not in attaining the ideal, but in constantly striving and aspiring for it. The life in the village republic will be an example of such a spiritual living because every man of a Panchayat will have a bond of affection for every other, and consequently will not develop a sense of having a possession. Even land will be considered as belonging to everybody. Gandhi says, “Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught, all land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it. Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the state, i.e. the People”

In a state like this police, military, and courts of Justice will have a character different from the one they have in the present day states. In fact, Gandhi feels that in a completely non-violent society there should not be any need of the present type of police or military or law-courts. But it is not possible to have a completely non-violent society all at once. Therefore, so long as imperfections and immorality remain, police and law-courts would be needed. But, Gandhi says that their character and pattern should be different they should not consider themselves to be the masters of the people, they should be real servants of society dedicated to the task of

reforming the wrong-doer. In fact, Gandhi feels that in a state of his conception there would not be much problem, because the possibility of crime will automatically go down. Whatever little acts of crime would be committed would be tackled with love. He is convinced that such a police would get spontaneous help from the people. Likewise, military should also be engaged in promoting the ways of non-violence. Use of arms would not be normally permitted, even the aggressor can be met with an army of satyagrahis. But so long as people are not reformed, police and military in their usual senses will have to be retained. He feelingly says, “Alas! in my Swaraj of today, there is room for soldiers.” “I agree too that a sudden withdrawal of the military and the police will be a disaster if we have not acquired the ability to protect ourselves against robbers and thieves.”

2. Check your Progress

1. How should ideal state be

7.8 LETS SUM UP

Thus, Gandhi is not in favour of the present-day system of education that is prevalent in India. Such an education merely imparts instructions, or makes man literate, but literacy is not education. Every individual is born with certain basic and in born tendencies and capacities. The aim of education should be to bring out such inherent capacities of every individual. This would be possible only when theoretical imparting of instruction is combined with practical training. Gandhi, like Dewey, perceives the value of learning by doing, and therefore recommends that education should begin with the learning of some crafts like: carpentry, poultry, spinning, weaving or any other similar handicraft. By actually doing manual work while learning, the individual will develop interest in his work and will be able to give out his best. This is what is known as Basic Education. In this type of

education the child is taught how to manipulate things by actually allowing him to do the thing himself. He comes to learn why a thing is done in a particular way and not in a different way. One advantage of this system would be that unlike the present-day prevalent system of education, the individual will find that the things that he learns are of actual use in life. That is why Gandhi is completely dissatisfied with the higher education that is imparted today in Indian universities. A scholar, after completing his studies, enters into the life-field only to find that there is absolutely no relation between what he had learnt and what he has to do. Therefore, he says, we have up to now concentrated on stuffing children's minds with all kinds of information, without ever thinking of stimulating and developing them. Let us now cry a halt and concentrate on educating the child properly through manual work, not as side activity, but as the prime means of intellectual training. You have to train the boys in one occupation or another, round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artist sense, and so on. He will be the master of craft he learns.”

There is yet another advantage of this kind of education this kind of education will become the spearhead of a silent social revolution. It will bring the city-life and village-life closer, and thus will eradicate the evil of class-difference. It will prevent the decay of village-culture and the lust for city-life, and thus will lay the foundation of a just social order giving equal opportunity and initiative to every individual. Moreover, as this system will make individuals skilled in their own arts, they will be masters of their own destiny, and will not become the object of exploitation of the privileged people. That is why Gandhi conceives Basic Education as having far-reaching consequences

7.9 KEY WORDS

Swaraj : Principle of Self Rule

Sarvodaya : Welfare of all

7.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain in detail Swaraj according to Gandhi

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7.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Answer to Check your Progress

- The idea of political freedom raises the question regarding the relation between the state and the individual.
- This problem has become very important in the recent times in view of the fact that sociological theories have started emphasising the primacy of community and have started saying that the individual apart from the community does not have any value.
- Gandhi, without undermining the importance of the society and the state, assigns to the individual also a very important place.
- In fact, he feels that the individual, in a sense, is more basic than the society or the state, not only because he is prior to society and the state, but also because he is the unit around which social and political organizations are built.

2 Answer to Check your Progress

1. Gandhis idea of the ideal state is the idea of the village Republic. We have seen that he favours a system of self-contained villages. He thinks that in the representative form of government there is the likelihood of individuals and small villages being ignored and neglected.