



University of Mumbai



# S a m b h ā ṣ a ṇ

A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Interdisciplinary Journal  
of the University of Mumbai

## Gandhi Then and Now: Communities and Peace Activisms [Volume II]

Gandhi: T. T. Pareek and Now: Autobiographies, Lived Experiences and Dialogues, October 2020. Gandhi: Then and Now: Influences and Engagements, November 2020.

This special issue is in collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center,  
Department of Applied Psychology and Counselling Center, University of Mumbai

Special Issue Editor: Satishchandra Kumar

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A Free Open Access Peer-Reviewed Interdisciplinary Journal

On the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's 129th birth anniversary on 14th April 2020, the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Mumbai has launched a free open access online journal, Sambhāṣaṇ. This interdisciplinary journal hopes to bring diverse disciplines in dialogue with each other through critical reflections on contemporary themes.

Sambhāṣaṇ or conversation as an art of dialogue has been crucial to the development of both Indian and Western thought. Dialogos in Greek literally means “through word”, where one establishes relationships on the basis of conversations to initiate processes of thinking, listening and speaking with others. Thinkers such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, David Bohm, Hans Georg Gadamer, Anthony Appiah and Martha Nussbaum have projected shared dialogue as a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and society. While Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Pandita Ramabai, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Patricia Hill Collins and Judith Butler, to name a few, have started out anew through ruptures in conversations. The inevitability of conversation in academic life emerges from its centrality to human development and ecology. Conversations are not restricted to any single territory, but are enacted between global and the local topographies. This online bi-lingual journal aims at continuing and renewing plural conversations across cultures that have sustained and invigorated academic activities.

**In this spirit, Sambhāṣaṇ an interdisciplinary monthly online journal endeavours to:**

- be an open platform, where scholars can freely enter into a discussion to speak, be heard and listen. In this spirit, this journal aims at generating open conversations between diverse disciplines in social sciences, humanities and law.
- preserve and cultivate pluralism as a normative ideal. Hence, it attempts to articulate a plurality of points of view for any theme, wherein there is both a need to listen and to speak, while engaging with another’s perspective.
- act as a springboard for briefly expressing points of view on a relevant subject with originality, evidence, argument, experience, imagination and the power of texts. It hopes that these points of view can be shaped towards full-fledged research papers and projects in the future.

## Framework

- This journal is open to contributions from established academics, young teachers, research students and writers from diverse institutional and geographical locations.
- Papers can be empirical, analytical or hermeneutic following the scholarly culture of critique and creativity, while adhering to academic norms.
- Commentaries and reviews can also be submitted.
- Submissions will be peer-reviewed anonymously.
- Some of the issues will publish invited papers and reviews, though there will be a call for papers for most issues.
- There would be an occasional thematic focus.

## Guidelines for Submission

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references.
- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.
- There can be a limit of approximately 3500–4000 words (for papers) and 1500–2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000–1200 words (for reviews).
- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space.
- All contributions should follow the author–date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th Edition). The style guidelines in this journal can be consulted for quick reference.
- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.
- The publication of research papers, commentaries and book reviews is subject to timely positive feedback from anonymous referees.

## Publisher

***Office of the Dean of Humanities, University of Mumbai,  
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This journal accepts original essays that critically address contemporary issues related to social sciences, humanities and law from an interdisciplinary perspective.

“In an ideal society there should be many interests consciously communicated and shared... In other words there must be social endosmosis.”

***Dr. B.R. Ambedkar***

## Editorial Note

This is the second volume of *Sambhāṣaṇ* dedicated to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's 151st birth anniversary. In the spirit of volume 1, October 2020 this volume too is a collaboration with the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center, University Department of Applied Psychology & Counseling Center, University of Mumbai on the theme "Gandhi: Then & Now". This issue engages with Gandhian praxis as activism committed to non-violent resistance, with the constructive agenda of forming heterogeneous communities.

Gandhi's autobiography, speeches and writings are not simply theoretical speculations or utopian ideals. They are rather rooted in praxis, which transforms both the individual and society by nurturing solidarities. Gandhi immersed himself in practising his experiments and counsels at the personal level. Non-violent resistance is explicit in his *satyagraha*, which is also a mode of



building communities that anchor the individual. The individual and the community have a reciprocal relationship where they develop through each other. It is in this sense that Gandhi has spurred activist cultures, cooperative societies, indigenous educational frameworks, village communities and non-corporate economies, to name a few. As Ramchandra Guha notes, Gandhi continued to inspire activist cultures in post-independent India, “For example, the Chipko Movement of the 1970s, ... was a non-violent protest against deforestation and its leaders called themselves Gandhians” (Kaushik 2018). However, one cannot claim with Guha that Gandhi was village-centric (Kaushik 2018). Gandhi travelled to remote villages in India to learn about cooperative living, which he believed was embodied in villages. The village for Gandhi is a symbol of peaceful coexistence and interdependence. It is from this point of view that in 1936 Gandhi claimed India “to be found not in its few cities but its 7,00,000 villages” (Joshi, 11). He urged city dwellers to leave their exploitative life-style that used resources of the villages, without contributing to them meaningfully. Thus, the problem for Gandhi is the “town-dweller” (Joshi, 11) who “... has generally exploited the villager” (Joshi, 11). Gandhi believed that village life – in the ideal sense – could be a guide for forming communities of interdependence. Progress can be made if the basics of cooperation are followed. Gandhi’s ideal village was both self-sufficient and interdependent. His discussion with Shrikrishnadas reveals a stoic cosmopolitan perspective on the symbiotic relationship between the village and the domains outside it. “Our outlook must be that we would serve the village first, then the neighbourhood, then the district and thereafter the province” (Joshi, 6).

The writings in this volume “Gandhi Then and Now: Communities and Peace Activisms (Volume II)” reveal the innovative ways in which Gandhian activists continue to develop his thought. They reveal how since Gandhi himself practised what he preached, those who adopt his vision have a bigger responsibility in integrating

the worlds of theory and practice. They have a responsibility to Gandhi, to themselves and to their communities. Moreover, this responsibility is also one of critically evaluating Gandhi. On this note, Saurabh Chaturvedi, Niharika Ravi, Sheetal Ravi and Ravi Narayanan focus on the complex terrain of village life as a vibrant work in progress that is related to the worlds around it. The essays by Anita Patil-Deshmukh, Fauziya Patel, Faraz Khan and Sandhya Mehta bring out the manner in which Gandhian thought has influenced the formation of communities, some of which are creative, as well as, civil society institutions such as the Mani Bhavan. The essay by Aparna Phadke reveals that peace for Gandhi is not simply the absence of violence, but a proactive condition of creating the spaces for interactive living. She argues that by embodying the interconnectedness of life and living beings, peace integrates the individual and community along the lines of sarvodaya. In sum, she argues for a broader interpretation of Gandhi's notion of village republics than that of isolationism or solipsism. The essays by Virendra Kumar, Akhouri Baibhav Prasad and Suchita Krishnaprasad show that Gandhi's contemporary relevance has "straddled" (Parel, 19) not just "two centuries" (Parel, 19) as Anthony Parel notes, but three. They bring out the specific ways in which Gandhi speaks to the present context of violence and pandemics in ways that can heal. Even in the 21st century, Gandhi's relationship to those who reference him in his endeavours to bridge theory and practice – and who are thereby his contemporaries – continues to be marked by what Parel has termed as dialogue, critique and indifference. These essays reveal that for Gandhi civil society and cultures of resistance are crucial to democracies. For Gandhian praxis draws upon the power of civil society, as the space of the individual and the community.

*Sambhāṣaṇ* remains grateful to Prof. Suhas Pednekar, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for their enduring encouragement. We thank our authors for readily contributing to this volume with their illuminating work despite

the shortage of time. Our peer reviewers as always have worked against tight deadlines and advised us. We are obliged to them. We are obliged to our Advisory Committee Members and Board of Consulting Editors for their suggestions. We welcome Ms. Arushi Sharma to our team of Assistant Editors who we thank for their inputs. Our *Dank* to Ms. Prajakti Pai for the layout and design. We are grateful to Dr. Srivaramangai and Mr. Sanket Sawant, who continue to remain bulwarks of support.

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Dedicated to ***Gandhians***  
working at the grassroots  
for **diversity, dialogue,**  
**inclusiveness, tolerance**  
and ***peace.***

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# COMMUNITIES

# Revisiting Gandhi's 'India of My Dreams': Globalisation and Village Republics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi's 'India of my Dreams' is a compilation of his previous works, writings and speeches, published on various forums like Young India, Navjeevan, and Harijan. The text aspires to give a complete layout of Mahatma Gandhi's expectations of a free and independent India to the reader. In the foreword, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, writes that "in our hour of victory...we cannot ignore...the undying principles which have inspired him... the achievement of India of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams will be the fitting consummation of all that he has worked for and stands for."

This paper revisits Gandhi's India of My Dreams 73 years after independence in the year 2020 and looks for ways to conform the present Indian state to Gandhi's views. It deliberates whether we have deviated from the path our father laid for us so clearly, and considers whether it is feasible to step back and introduce reforms. It looks at India's dealings with its villages in the face of globalisation over the past few decades and compares these with Gandhi's instructions in the book.

Decentralisation policies, migration in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, women's safety and education policy in India are looked at in a village-globalisation lens to specifically analyse the effects of globalisation on Indian

villages in all these spheres of life, looking in equal parts at polity and social life- a fundamental tenet in Gandhi's writings.

Finally, an amalgamation of various ideas on a multitude of problems that have been posed to Indian society and polity in the 21st century are coalesced to attempt to derive a solution and offer a recommendation in the concluding note.

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Technological advancements, the computer and the internet globalisation and western civilisation have facilitated the publication of millions of research documents on an eclectic range of pedagogical concentrations spanning every significant discovery made by humankind. However, it seems with research in general, and the contemporary academia on the social sciences in specific, there exists an insufficiency of viable and practically implementable solutions to the research problems. In stark contrast, 'India of my Dreams' manifests as a futuristic handbook for Indian governance, or rather, a practical manual of the Father of the Nation's vision for the motherland. It is most appropriate, in this context, to examine this striking piece of literature in the given theme: then and now.

'India of My Dreams' is timeless in conception and reception. A compilation of Gandhi's thoughts and writings amassed from pre-existent literature delivered by him over a span of many years, arguably, the most compelling part of this compendium of ideas is the preface note addressed "to the reader" which acknowledges any discrepancies that may be found in Gandhi's writing, advising the reader to consider the later published idea on the same subject. Gandhi insists that he, too, is human: an organic being, capable of growth and change (Gandhi, 1947, 1). However, the underlying theme of almost all 75 chapters of the book is coloured by the author's aspiration for India to evade the so-called "ill-effects" of globalisation, European culture, and Western Civilisation. This is, debatably, a fierce stand against change itself.

The dichotomy of the Mahatma's ideas about a globalised world and his advocacy of village republics is an intriguing feature of the book, especially when the time

period in which it was written is considered. Historian R.G. Collingwood declares contemporary history a myth, and considers a historian's task as a 're-enactment of past thoughts' (Smith 2012). Doing justice to Gandhi's thoughts "then and now" can only mean that one must study his beliefs in the setting of his time and ours. It is evident that his ideas cannot be assessed in a vacuum, but they are relevant now, more than ever, in the face of a global pandemic and the de-urbanisation it has caused in the country.

The representation of Gandhi's views on globalisation and villages is a vast ocean of knowledge in the given book. Applying interpretations of these views to contemporary India would prove to be an arduous task that may bear little fruit. Thus this paper deals with Gandhi's writings on these subjects in modern socio-political praxis relevant majorly to this crude juncture in human history brought forth by the present pandemic. Decentralisation, migration, and de-urbanisation during the COVID-19 pandemic, education and women's safety are examined under a village-globalisation lens in this paper.

## **Globalisation and Village Republics: Then and Now**

While Ambedkar and Nehru treated the Indian village as a site of oppression and backwardness respectively, to Gandhi, the village was a symbol of authenticity. The former, much like the colonial administrators of their time, neglected the pulse of the Indian village as the soul of the nation and regarded it as an object to be liberated from social evils and transformed into urban suburbs, akin to those found in the west (Jhodka 2002, 3343-3344). We inspect globalisation in relation to Indian villages here forth, rather than examining them as separate entities.

The 'village republic' fashioned by Gandhi in his writings is not the one he created in idealistic or romantic imagination, but one that had existed as an "autonomous republic" for eons under various rajahs in the erstwhile kingdoms of what is today called India. It is hence that traditional Indian life is still conceptualised as one that resides in the village, which is regarded as the basic unit of Indian civilisation and social structure. However, the hegemony of the Zamindars, Ryotwars and

Mahalwars over the village economy only added fuel to the fire that was the plethora of social evils that haunted rural Indian society during colonial and post-colonial times (Jhodka 2002, 3350). Nonetheless, Gandhi, unlike his contemporaries, insisted that India was found, not in her cities but in her (then) 7,00,000 villages. He states that not only was the town dweller ignorant to the plight of his village brethren, he was also their greatest exploiter (Prasad 2001).

The idea of exploitation in the milieu of globalisation and village societies is an interesting one to analyse. Towns, in Gandhi's time, were said to be secluded havens of progress and industrialisation. Migration, and subsequently urbanisation, was a mandate if one aspired to partake in the so-called wonders of 19th century industrial revolution that was imposed upon the naïve Indian population by its colonial overlords. While towns thrived and, moreover, cities began to develop as urbane hubs of prosperity, Mother India bore a new child. The newly founded Indian middle class emerged to be a significant player in the Indian Independence Movement. However, the middle class' substantial influence on the Indian economy made it central to the tussle between upcoming Indian industrialists and the Colonial Raj (Oonk 2015, 43-47). The discernable chain of exploitation in 20th century industrialised India comes off as a nightmare of Marxian proportions as the industrial workers here, akin to their brethren in Russia, were plagued by social alienation- not only from the product and the process, but also from their people and government. However, it is questionable if the license raj born out of the subsequently adopted Soviet-inspired five year development plan model did much good to these industrialists either.

While the industrialists and other "town-dwellers" exploited the village people, they, in turn, were exploited by the colonisers who "supported" them, while simultaneously imposing trade restrictions, barriers and unreasonable taxation. This is reflected in Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Drain of Wealth' theory as well, that blamed the tax burden levied on the average Indian and the lack of immigration into India that grossly affected industrialisation as some of the many reasons for the failing Indian economy in the moderate era (Naoroji 1901, 628).

This exploitation is characteristic of erstwhile insular colonialists across the globe, and was probably indoctrinated in the Indian mind-set as well, especially in the cities and towns. Gandhi, in 1969, wrote of villages that were deserted for many months every year as villagers went to Bombay to work under “unhealthy and... immoral conditions” (Jhodka 2002, 3345). Upon return, they would bring with them corruption, drunkenness and disease to the villages. So impressionable was the mind of the lay Indian that exposure to the urban would cause him to absorb habits and behaviour that perhaps, were ill-suited for him. It is astonishing that this aspect of Indian thought and behaviour stands true even today, and is further explored in this paper under the lens of women’s safety.

Surinder Jhodka presents Gandhi’s changing points of focuses regarding Indian villages in three distinct phases. While, at the offset, the Mahatma concentrated on equating Indian villages to the west, his later writings sought to pit village life against urban life, offering the former as an alternative to modernity, and by extension, globalisation. The latter phase encompasses Gandhi’s focus on reforming the existing villages in India (Jhodka 2002, 3346). This is a predominant theme in the part of ‘India of My Dreams’ that deals with villages wherein Gandhi describes the idyllic village, outlining acceptable standards of health, sanitation, food and work. The creation of such utopian village republics is greatly dependent on globalisation, or lack thereof, especially in the current state of things. This idea is explored further in application to the migrant crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gandhi’s resentment of globalisation is established by his challenges to industrialisation, which he refers to as a “curse”. He declares that “this mania for mass-production is responsible for the world crisis” (Gandhi 1947, 36). However, what Gandhi neglects to express is that the values of liberty and fraternity that he preaches, his learnings from Thoreau and Tolstoy and the idea of democracy itself are all western inheritances and, for India, products of 18th and 19th century globalisation. Notably, world-wide anti-globalisation movements portray Gandhi as someone who shared their ideology, in spite of the fact that Gandhi, himself, was a “product of globalisation” having been educated in London and having started his political activities in South Africa (Mukherjee). Yet, it would be arrogant to assume that the Mahatma did not realise this. This aspect of the compilation of Gandhi’s philosophies is evidence to the multi-layered and multi-faceted nature

of his writings and the deliberate omission of specific ideas that may have been a hindrance to the realisation of his dreams for India.

Dr. Tabassum Sheikh speaks of 'Gandhi and globalisation' in relation to economic development, which she deems unimportant if it fails to uplift the impoverished and those from the lowest rungs of society. Her contention is that each man who contributes to or participates in economic development has the right to reap the benefits of the same and fully realise their fundamental and human rights. Therefore, "development" that favours the elite's narrow interests in society then, or the already developed global north now, at the cost of denying rights to the underprivileged or the global south respectively, is not development at all (Sheikh). In fact, the application of the Marxian theory of alienation may be fitting to this form of economic un-development, wherein the working class is alienated from the product of its hard work and denied the right to participate in making decisions about the process of production. To this end, Gandhi says that when production and consumption are both localised, one would see the temptation to speed up production at any price disappear. (Gandhi 1947, 35) While he insists that such localisation would bring an end to all the perils of the modern economic system, this equilibrium of production and consumption is a feature of perfect competition that economists have been vying to establish practically for decades. This is a pertinent example of the aforementioned gap between theory and practice in social science research that 'India of My Dreams' has inevitably fallen prey to as well.

Gandhi's characterisation of western industrial society vis-à-vis the Indian village society and economy as 'one man's food is another man's poison' is aptly representative herein as well (Gandhi 1947, 35). Indeed, the marvels of industrialisation, globalisation and development have been incredibly gainful for western civilisation in the colonial and post-colonial periods, at the cost of nurturing Indian village economies. Many a study about the decline of economies in colonies around the globe have indicated that "the white man's burden" was a façade that masked the undertaking of mass plundering by European colonisers and overlords. Of these, the most eminent in recent times is Dr. Shashi Tharoor's speech titled 'Britain Does Owe Reparations' delivered at the Oxford Union. Herein, Dr. Tharoor illustrates how India was governed for the benefit of Britain and that



the latter's rise was financed by the depredation of India. Gandhi's charkha and khadi, which Nehru called "the livery of India's freedom," are symbols of protest against British industrialisation which led to the complete fall of the traditional Indian handloom. The entire premise of toxic colonialism in contemporary times can be equated to this aspect of 19th and 20th century industrialisation – and while the colonialist, under his garb of nobly endeavouring to civilise the native people of the colony, fooled the masses into serving his every wish and command, the burden of silently accepting and painstakingly managing his off-cuts fell on the poor colony. Needless to say, this is a widely prevalent phenomenon that can be observed in most erstwhile colonies and present-day third world nations alike, including Vietnam, which was a French Colony and The Philippine Islands: Rudyard Kipling's inspiration for his poem titled 'The White Man's Burden'.

The British colony of India was an agrarian economy. Over 75% of the Indian population was made of agriculturists who lived in villages in the 1900s. Inadvertently, these village dwellers faced the brunt of Britain's aforementioned conscious de-industrialisation of India. In this light, Gandhi's emphasis on village industries and mill industries and discouragement of the passive or active exploitation of villagers was highly relevant to his time. Mechanisation, according to Gandhi, is good when the hands are few but evil when there are more hands than are required for the work, like in India (Gandhi 1947, 101).

Herein, one can recognise the visionary that Gandhi was as India, in the present-day, is plagued by the ills of disguised unemployment, which is most rampant in the primary sector in India today. To Gandhi, decentralisation and focus on the village republic could solve many of the problems that we still face today. Hence, it is only fitting to analyse Gandhi's ideas of decentralisation from the 20th century and ascertain if the same could be viable in 21st century India.

## **Decentralisation and Public Policy in Globalised India**

Economic development, in Gandhi's eyes, would only be possible if the state achieved complete decentralisation. To him, "independence must begin at the

bottom' and so, decentralisation was essential to the establishment and the sustenance of the village republic system. In 'Non-violent Economy,' Gandhi insists that the establishment of said non-violent economy is impossible if the gap between the rich and the impoverished persists and advocates dignity of labour. He states that India must adopt a policy of decentralisation to evolve around non-violent lines, and in doing so proposes a system of socialism that he advertises as a 'Ram Rajya,' commonly perceived as the ideal form of society in Hindu philosophy (Gandhi 1947, 72-74).

Gandhi's evident fear of economic divide between the top 1% and bottom 20% or so of society, and his distress regarding lack of dignity of labour destroying society and economy are more than justified in the 20th century setting (Gandhi 1947, 75-79). The discussed trend of migration to cities and the growing perils of a capitalised, industrialised economy led to the creation of an Indian bourgeoisie. While this new Indian industrialist class flourished in the city lights, the failed crops in the drought-stricken villages pushed farming families over the edge. A grand divide was born. The then-town dweller was ostentatiously wealthy, whilst the average farmer was impoverished and hungry (Madhumati 2011, 63-64).

The famines of 1896-1897 and 1899-1900, both caused by drought, struck particularly hard on the Indian village economy, but hardly affected the towns. However, in context of creating a 'Non-violent Economy' in Gandhi's Ram Rajya (Gandhi 1947, 72-75), one must note the controversies surrounding the officially recorded mortality rates of the Bihar famine of 1966 and the Maharashtra famine of 1972-73. Here, it is pertinent to question the socialistic ideals that were adopted by Nehru, and further promulgated by Indira Gandhi, since the bureaucratic and institutional apathy exhibited by the government during these famines is arguably nothing short of violence in the economy. Moreover, the present politico-economic standing of a post-industrialised and largely centralised India is characteristic of what the Mahatma feared for India's future. The lack of decentralisation and the limitations and shortcomings of the comparatively recently introduced system of local self-governance, along with the legacies of the licence raj have marred the Indian economy with rampant corruption, gross

economic inequality and most recently, the risk of foreign invasion in urbanised India that Gandhi seemed to dread the most (Sharma, Singh, and Singh 2008, 729-731).

A reconstruction of the entire social order is recommended in the writings as the way to equal distribution (Gandhi 1947, 75-78). While this system does not deny each man what he wants, it provides him only with how much he needs. This was the case for the Indian middle and lower classes who sustained themselves on the ration administered by the government for many decades post-independence. However, present-day India, with its system of 'federal governance with a central bias' is a confused, yet overly centralised economy when looked at in a Gandhian lens (Chakroborty and Pandey 2009, 10). This is evident in the Indian State's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, for while the centre issued a certain set of guidelines, each state issued other guidelines that rarely ratified the former. Interestingly, the centre, in its guidelines for September, censured this behaviour by mandating that no state shall issue separate orders contrary to the ones released by it. On the other hand, such a system is essential in a land as vast and varied as India, not just in this scenario but in all situations. Then again, one cannot ignore the inherent contradiction with regard to centralisation and, indeed, decentralisation herein.

The recent uproar regarding the Central Board for Secondary Education's next edition of textbooks for its higher secondary social science students was majorly concerned with the elimination of concepts like federalism and decentralisation from the texts. For many, this move was seen as an aggressive shift towards a more centralised system of governance in the future, taking a departure from the legacy of the Gandhian values discussed here.

Wilfred Wellock takes an interesting stand on the internationalism of decentralisation in 'Is there a Nonviolent Road to a Peaceful World?' wherein he submits that a world peace order could be established by following a two-sided revolution leading to personal resistance of all war and nuclear armaments, along with a social and industrial decentralisation that fulfils each individual's right to responsibility, expression and cooperative participation in an industry (Wellock, 261-264). One may identify the roots of this interpretation, once again,

in Gandhi's counsel on running a village industry. The 'Khadi mentality' speaks of decentralisation of production and distribution of the necessities of life and the simultaneous nationalisation of heavy industry, striking a balance while also providing 'choice before labour' and fundamental worker's rights to the village workforce (Gandhi 1947, 106).<sup>1</sup>

## **COVID-19 Migrant Crisis and the Village Republic System**

The focus on the village workforce and its rights manifests in Gandhi's discourse on unemployment and migration as well, both in 'India of My Dreams' and in 'My Experiments with Truth.' It is thought-provoking to assess the continuing dominance of the migrant population in the urban economy and the psycho-social relevance of migration in colonial India and in the 21st century modern nation.

In keeping with Dadabhai Naoroji's assessment of the economy in 1867 (Naoroji 1901), migration into India was sparse at this time. On the other hand, emigration was widespread. In 'My Experiments with Truth,' the Smuts-Gandhi agreement and Gandhi's general displeasure with the system of indentured emigration are brought to light along with his activism for the immediate abolition of indentured labour comes to light (Gandhi 1927, 447-450). UNESCO observes that the first Indian indentured immigration was recorded in the 1830s. Nearly 12 lakh Indians were relocated to 19 countries over a span of 100 years since then (UNESCO). Gandhi made his first petition against this 'semi-slavery' in 1894. His actions, at Madan Mohan Malviya's bequest, warranted a blanket ban on the indentured labour system that was levied by the English in 1917 (Gandhi 1927, 447-450).

On the other hand, his disapproval of migration from villages to towns and cities is also evident in his many writings. His model of village republics promulgated in 'The Gospel of Swadeshi' promotes the inculcation of an attitude for every Indian to prefer an indigenous good to a foreign-made one, and moreover, a good produced by a village industry to one made in the mills. However, he

does not wish for the extinction of landlords and capitalists, who facilitate most migration (Gandhi 1947, chap. 31) . In 'Class War,' Gandhi writes that he wishes for a transformation in the existing relationship between the capitalists or landlords and the masses into something purer and healthier as the idea of a class war does not appeal to him (Gandhi 1947, chap. 8) . However, from his writings, one can infer that Gandhi wants labour, and indeed good labour, to be brought to the labourer who must continue living in his sovereign, independent village republic. Astonishingly, the idea of bringing the labour to the labourer has taken tangible form as the 'Work from Home' policy that global society has been forced to adopt in the present pandemic. Unfortunately, however, such policies in 21st century India are financially viable to the upper and upper middle class and deprive the lower class that migrant labourers belong to of financial, social and psychological support.

The Hindu Business Line, in June 2020, looked back at Gandhi's 'gram swaraj' in light of the migrant crisis that emerged due to the spread of COVID-19. It called for an independent village with self-governance that was built on the principles of sustainability. Indeed, the exodus of the migrants and their plight pushed the nation to realise that these workers are the backbone of the modern Indian economy. Many thousands of these labourers, stranded in cities without money or transport, began making long inter-state journeys home on foot during the global pandemic (Chandurkar 2020). The World Economic Forum reported that India had 139 million internal migrants in 2017. In the same report, the forum urged that these internal migrants 'must not be forgotten' (Krishnavatar 2017) . COVID-19 has reminded India of the role that migrant labourers play in our society, despite their low income sustenance. Adopting Gandhian socialism and de-centralised village republic governance would certainly have benefitted this section of the population greatly in the past 73 years. However, sustaining a village republic economy in a globalised world would have proved to be a challenge in the long run.

## **Feminism and Village Globalisation: Bane of the Glocalised Indian Village**

Once again, Gandhi admired the Indian village as a symbol of authenticity. The village republic was, once, the innocent playground of traditional Indian life and the cradle of culture, values, customs, languages, clothing and administrative systems, often unique to each specific village. Pre-colonial villages were independent units, governed with minimum intervention from the monarchical seats of power. The village heads held legislative and judicial functions and while there was rampant caste and gender-based bias in society, these were the realities of those times and must not be judged in the light of present socio-cultural progress. However, the tenacity of the village culture in compromising with certain “traditions” mandates criticism in the era of glocalisation, which takes into consideration both global and local practices.

The advent of globalisation was fatal to the independent realm of village culture. The emergence of the global village diminished the sovereignty of the local one. The penetration of western sociological thought, the values of liberty, equality, fraternity and democracy were borrowed hand-me-downs acquired by modern India, worn out, and lent in the form of shreds to glocalised village systems. It is no wonder, in this scenario, that the village society became prone to the sociological theory of culture lag. Acquired knowledge of modern, western ideas that were pitted against age-old traditional values imparted by misinterpreted religious texts in addition to the arrival of modern technology proved lethal to one particular section of society: the women.

A glaring evidence of this phenomenon is the Indian saga of prenatal ultrasounds, popularly known as the sex determination test. While Indian customs entailed traditions like dowry and child marriage that led to a preference for the birth of a male child who could “carry the family name forward” and simultaneously earn for the family, technological advancements facilitated the opportunity to completely eliminate the “burden” of the female child by murdering her before birth itself. Female foeticide became so rampant by 1994 that a legislative ban on prenatal ultrasounds was imposed in the country. Amrita Tripathi traced the history of the male-female ratio in the nation alongside the introduction of

affordable ultrasound technology in India. She notes that while in 1982, the female to male ratio was 962:1000, it dropped to 945 females in 1991, 927 in 2001 and 918 in the 2011 census. (Tripathi 2016). The preference for male children resulting in this skewed ratio of male to female population in the country is notably documented in 'No Country for Young Girls' funded by the United Nations Population Fund that portrays the struggle of a young woman who must choose between staying with a man who does not wish to have a girl child or leaving him to live a life of difficulties in abject poverty. Indeed, the ever-dipping male female ratio only substantiates the claim that India is no country for young girls.<sup>2</sup>

Here, one must note that the gruesome 2020 Hyderabad Vet Gang Rape Case was compared to the 2012 Nirbhaya Gang Rape Case that made world headlines at the time because of the socio-economic and geographical backgrounds of the rapists. The fact that the alleged and convicted rapists respectively were migrants from villages was highlighted by the media. The underlying message herein is another proof of the pervasiveness of culture lag in glocalised Indian society. Free access revenge pornography and child pornography, in addition to sexualisation of children and the sensationalised and grossly misogynistic depiction of the "woman of the city" in Indian films seem to have birthed misconceptions about "modern" city life in the mind of the impressionable village dweller. These are products of globalisation that have penetrated the narrow-minded outlook of traditional village society, constructing an unsafe environment for women and children.

This complicated web of socio-cultural realities conform to Gandhian ideas to some extent. However, the internet would have permeated the hypothetical 21st century village republic just as easily as it has the 21st century globalised republic. In fact, what little gender equality that India can boast of would have been negligible without globalisation.<sup>3</sup>

The looming truth of the 21st century, as reflected in the 2011 census, is that female foeticide and, by extension, dowry and child marriage are still extremely prevalent in Indian society. Moreover, The Hindu noted that the coronavirus induced lockdown led to a significant rise in the cases of child marriage with more than a 100 cases between mid-March and July occurring in the Mysore district alone

(Khan 2020). One can only imagine the hidden realities of rape within families as the country celebrated a drop in reported rape cases during the lockdown. Reports suggest that cases of domestic violence, which is often a consequence of unmet dowry demands, are also at an all-time high at this time. This is evidence to the fact that a glocalised system of education is the need of the hour in order to combat these social evils in 21st century physical India that mentally resides in the 18th century.

## **Assessing the National Education Policy (2020): A Glocalised Lens**

Globalisation is always relevant to education. Education is always relevant to the village lifestyle. Gandhi believes that education should be capable of connecting children of both, cities and villages to all that is “best and lasting in India.” He opines that physical, intellectual and moral development should be the objects of basic education. Moreover, he states that all education must be imparted in the provincial language and that college education should be revolutionised to fit national necessities. He recommends practical learning and apprenticeship alongside theoretical studies, especially at the side of certified luminaries in the concerned fields. Additionally, despite his belief that knowledge of religious books is no equivalent of that of religion, he makes a powerful case for the involvement of religious studies, if not in the school curriculum, then as a co-curricular or extra-curricular undertaking. Lastly, he strongly wishes to oust any influence of the west from the Indian Education System (Gandhi 1947, 178-188).

Fascinatingly, these are some of the major aspects of the revolution of education that seems to be set in motion with the advent of the National Education Policy (Government of India 2020). In fact, the National Education Policy is a champion of Gandhi’s views on education. However, the imposition of the provincial language as a medium of instruction, the incorporation of religious studies in the curriculum and the introduction of apprenticeship at the primary school level have all been questioned by the critics of this new education policy as well. It is evident to the city-dwelling, English-speaking privileged student that being



educated in a provincial language shall be depredatory to one's opportunities to work in a world that is dominated by English speakers. The measure of success in the 21st century globalised world is to be gainfully employed by multinational corporations or international organisations after being educated outside one's third world nation, and this is true of both city and village dwellers. These modern aspirations shall be gruesomely hit if the average school-goer is deprived of his English education, even if he finds that being educated in the provincial language is more convenient at that time. Even so, one must not assume that learning in the provincial language shall necessarily be easier, more so when one considers the high numbers of internal migrants in the country.

Next, the incorporation of religious studies in the curriculum as a mode of moral education (that has also been encouraged by Gandhi), while excellent on paper, raises questions about the capability of those who impart such knowledge and their commitment, not to secularism but to pluralism, for Gandhi would also agree with the fact that pluralism is the most fundamental feature of a truly glocal society.

Lastly, in a third world nation like India wherein the standard of both, education and skills of teachers are questioned, and where a negligible portion of the national budget is pledged towards education, the layman has been found asking himself if the National Education Policy, especially in terms of its ultramodern ideas like primary school apprenticeship, could stand the tests of lack of funds and incompetency of educational authorities.

## **Concluding Notes: Endeavouring to Provide Solutions**

*"To the preliterate man of integral vision a fable is what we call a major scientific truth...our own self-amputations can today provide the beginnings of a new science of man and technology."*

*-McLuhan, War and Peace in the Global Village*

Gandhi's writings indicate that he understood the consequence of a western form of industrialisation as destructive of Indian society. Such destruction, in his views, would purge decentralised rural industries and effectively obliterate village lifestyle. The emphasis he lays on reviving, improving, encouraging and conserving various facets of the village republics effectively rejects centralisation, globalisation, industrialisation and, by extension, technology and progress. Of course, Gandhi probably never imagined the impact of technology on the village republics. Foreseeably, technology, if not anything, would have coaxed these village republics out of their sovereign, independent cocoons, only a few decades later than globalisation primarily did.

A systemic revolution, akin to the National Education Policy, must be initiated in order to pander to the socio-economic and political issues born out of globalisation and industrialisation. Moreover, the environmental impacts of the same must be tackled in a mindful manner, keeping all the concerned stakeholders in mind while making any decision and consulting them while framing laws. This can only be done by mastering necessary skills of management and governance. Hence, the root to all solutions can be traced back to reforming the system and standard of education being imparted in the country.

The National Education Policy is not a liability, but an opportunity to incorporate these values in future lawmakers and citizens. In keeping with Gandhi's belief that college education should be designed with national interests in mind, this new policy has already shown the inclination to impart humanitarian and sociological lessons to all students. Moreover, the policy's intention to focus on the positive use of technology can be a turning point in guiding the youth of the nation to make meaningful use of technology and the internet of things, lest technology itself be the ruin of the 21st century. More importantly, a focus on making young Indians educated and not just literate must be adopted in order to truly host progress on the various fronts discussed in this paper.

While it may be too late to completely reform the structure of Indian society to accommodate Gandhi's village republics, there is still the opportunity of investing time, money and concentration on the villages themselves. The social evils discussed herein are still widespread in rural India and have proved to be

immune to the educational aspects of globalisation. Hence, the most feasible solution to the impacts of industrialisation and globalisation in the Indian village is a reformed, all-inclusive, modern, comprehensive, practical, and pluralistic educational system.

## Notes

1. In 'India of My Dreams,' Gandhi speaks of tanning industries and other industries as separately from the khadi industry. He illustrates the practical implementation of his ideas under the heading 'how to begin.'
2. 'Son Rise' and 'The Unwanted' are more documentaries that have been made on the subject of gender ratio in India. However, despite widespread media coverage, the sex ratio has only depreciated over the years and globalisation has not aided women.
3. At this time, the divide between the so-called city and village mentalities is so great that for the "modern" city-dweller, exposed to the full brunt of globalisation, the very notion that sex on the pretext of marriage can be awarded with legal punishment seems outlandish. On the other hand, in more conservative societies, sex before marriage is aptly a punishable offense and, moreover, a sin. The difference in opinion on such an essential question of law runs so deep in the globalised urban and the conservative rural, that one speculates that each village republic, having a separate ideology, would require not just a separate civil code but also a separate criminal code, making the Indian Constitution itself, along with the Indian Penal Code and the Civil Procedure Code etc. null and void.

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*Saaraakassh – An attempt  
towards a village republic  
in the footsteps of  
M.K.Gandhi...*

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## **Abstract:**

Realizing our own social responsibility and that it was time to give back to the society, Saaraakassh Trust, was founded on the 2nd October 2015, by doing its first Annadaanam distribution on this day. Though not planned it was by a happy coincidence that Gandhiji's birthday became the Foundation Day of Saaraakassh Trust too. Saaraakassh believes in the principle of Sarvadaanam which encompasses not only Annadaanam but Vidyadaanam, Aushadadaanam, Vastadaanam, Vastradaanam and daanam in any capacity based on the needs of the poor, underprivileged and downtrodden people of our society.

Over the days, the trustees of Saaraakassh realized that if this large and widespread goal was to be implemented and executed well then it needed to be streamlined. Meetings and discussions with likeminded people led the trustees to the interiors of Maharashtra in the adivasi villages of Murbad district. Thus, it dawned on them, about the new scope of rural development which became a major impetus to take the Trust's work forward. This led to Saaraakassh Trust starting its work with tribal villages in Murbad district since the year 2017. Over the days, the model espoused was to adopt a village and try and render all possible help that they required by holding discussions with the villagers of their requirements. Thus, a partnership and inclusive model was put in place where the villagers too were actively involved.

In this present project paper, we showcase the journey of Saaraakassh through each village in its attempt to make it a model village to the best of its capacity by rendering different and varied services to enable education, eradicate malnutrition, and encourage sanitation.

We hope to now achieve what Gandhiji had envisioned for an ideal village or village Swaraj, that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is necessary. Saaraakassh does not know the time that may be required but it has started taking its steps in this direction hoping to achieve this dream someday soon.

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## **Vision Statement of Saaraakassh Trust:**

**To bring a smile to every wanting soul.**

### **सारा आकाश**

झोप त्याग, श्वास भरू, जयाची ललकार रे  
चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
हो जी हो जी हो जी जी

कठीण आहे खेळ, त्यातून नाही मेळ  
करू नका हे भेद, तुमच्यात आहे देव,  
जाळू मनाचे जाळ, घेऊ चला ही झोप,  
सैतान तुमच्या पाठी, द्यावी तयास मात

स्फोटरे ..विस्फोटा रे ..स्फोट करू युक्ती अन – पेटवूया रान रे

चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
हो जी हो जी हो जी जी

होऊ नको उदास, अग्नीचा भारी श्वास  
आकाशी घेई झोप, मन पाखरा जणूच,

मन घे तू ही भरारी, काही नाही कठीण  
 कुचळू रे सारी भीती, दे बजरंगी हुकार  
 पेटवू ... अरे पेटवू ..पेटवूया आज ..मनाची ही मशाल रे  
 चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
 चाल चाल चाल चला ध्येय करू साध्य रे  
 हो जी हो जी हो जी जी

### **Saaraakassh Anthem English Adaptation**

Sacrificing sleep, taking a deep breath, giving the clarion call  
 Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Ho ji, Ho ji, Ho ji, ji.

The game is difficult; there is no option to that  
 Do not discriminate, in you resides God  
 Burn the mind's cobwebs, let's take this leap  
 The Devil is behind you, Defeat him!

Explode. Blast... Let's Explode with ideas and burn the jungle.

Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Ho ji, Ho ji, Ho ji, ji.

Do not be sad, there is fire in your breath  
 Take a giant leap towards the sky, as if the mind is a butterfly  
 Oh my mind take this flight, nothing is difficult  
 Crush all fear, Shout Bajrangi's name

Burn... burn.. Let us burn today.. the torch in our mind

Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Let's march, march, march ahead to accomplish our goal.  
 Ho ji, Ho ji, Ho ji, ji.  
 Ho ji, Ho ji, Ho ji, ji.  
 Ho ji, Ho ji, Ho ji, ji.

This is how we dreamt a dream!! At first it was a small dream, of helping others in our own small capacity, thus trying to bridge the gap between '*the have and the have not's*'. For the last 5 years, the Trust, in the Dombivili area has been distributing



food packets to around 40-50 poor people on a daily basis. What started as an Anna Daanam initiative later spread its wings in many directions.

Saaraakassh Trust, a Sarvadaanam initiative started its work on the 2nd October, 2015, by doing its first Annadaanam distribution on this day. Though not planned it was by a happy coincidence that Gandhiji's birthday became the Foundation Day of Saaraakassh Trust too. Saaraakassh believes in the principle of Sarvadaanam which encompasses daanam in any capacity, which includes not only Annadaanam but also Aushadadaanam, Vidyadaanam, Vastradaanam, Vastadaanam; based on the needs of the down trodden, underprivileged and poor people of our society.

However, if this large and widespread goal was to be implemented and executed well then it needed to be streamlined. Meetings and discussions with likeminded people such as Dalal bhai of Motilal Dalal Trust led us to the interiors of Maharashtra in the adivasi villages of Murbad district. Thus, it dawned on the trustees, about the new scope of rural development which became a major impetus to take the Trust's work forward. This led to Saaraakassh Trust starting its work with tribal villages in Murbad district since the year 2017. Over the days, the model espoused was to adopt a village and try and render all possible help that they required by holding discussions with the villagers of their requirements. Thus, a partnership and inclusive model was put in place where the villagers too were actively involved.



Saaraakassh Trustee, Ravi Narayanan in discussion with villagers of Musrundi Village.

To quote Gandhiji, “Take the village people and slum-dwellers in your hands and give them the benefit of your knowledge, skill, insight, constructive work and patriotic spirit. Give the people this true education through the example of your own lives. Let all your activities be directed to the welfare of the people.” This became the roadmap for Saaraakassh too.

Thus the long-term vision is to keep adopting villages one by one and reach out to maximum people. Till date, Saaraakassh has worked extensively in three villages namely Musrundi, Pezwadi and Karpatwadi. Here we showcase the journey of Saaraakassh through each village in its attempt to make it a model village to the best of its capacity.

## **1. Village Musrundi:**

Situated just 18 kms away from Kalyan which is a hustling and bustling city with all the latest amenities, is a village called Musrundi. The Saaraakassh Trust team visited the adivasi village of Musrundi on 14th January 2017 to distribute Tilgul and clothes on the festive day of Makara Sakranti.

It was unbelievable that a village which is only a couple of hours away from Mumbai has only one well of potable water for a population of 400. That too this well starts drying up by February until the rain gods are benevolent and fills it up by July!!! And hence the thought germinated that something has to be done to get potable drinking water available to this village through the year. Easier said than done is what we realized as the nearest river body, the Murbadi river was 4 kms away from the village and the path in between is a hilly terrain.

However, where there is a will, there is a way. And after a couple of meetings with the villagers, work started on January 26th 2017. It was decided that the villagers would contribute by doing the physical labour. Thus, the villagers were going to be involved partners in this project and not just passive beneficiaries. The cost was nothing less than 7 Lacs for this whole project. Being a novice in such grass root level work, Saaraakassh did not know that many documents are required to

be in place before such a work can be undertaken. Getting the forest department permission was mandatory which the Saaraakassh team realized only after the electric poles had been delivered to the village! Once the required documents were in order, the permission from the forest department too was forthcoming.

Jain Irrigation came into the picture and at a very reasonable price gave the underground water pipes. Their engineers themselves came to survey and later supervise the laying down of the pipes. Many of the villagers had by then lost steam and on the day of the laying down of pipes there were hardly any menfolk in the village. The Saaraakassh team went from house to house to gather the womenfolk to come and help in the physical labour as promised. With the Saaraakassh team leading from the front, and the womenfolk and children of the village the laying down of the water pipes over a stretch of 4 kms was achieved in a day's time. Thus, the herculean task of bringing water to the village from the Murbadi river through the mountainous terrain by laying a pipeline was achieved by 17th June 2017. However this water was not potable. And hence to make the water potable, a filtration plant too was installed. A year went by to achieve this project. But there is much gratitude towards all those people who made this dream project turn into a reality.

Though the Saaraakassh team has moved on to do shramadaan in the further villages; the connection with the Musrundi village is still deep what with our visits for the Zilla Parishad school functions, festivals and even weddings. Distribution of school items, stationery, toys, clothes and so forth is also done regularly at the village.

## **2. Village Pezwadi:**

On the first visit to the adivasi village, Pezwadi on January 14th, 2017 on the festive day of Makar Sankranti, the Saaraakassh Team observed that all the children appeared to be undernourished. A preliminary health checkup was organized on the same day, and our team realized that most kids do not have a healthy dietary

habit which negatively impacted their growth and development, thus hampering their overall health and well being.

This led to the creation of the **Pilot Milk Project with Ashwagandha Powder** for the children of the Pezwadi ZP School!

Various research studies have reported that together, Milk and Ashwagandha make a remarkable difference in the overall growth of children. An associate organization of Saaraakassh Trust, Vaishanvi trust had been successfully running this project for some time in Chennai and surrounding region, and it was from there that we got the inspiration to do the same.

Before beginning this pilot project, firstly we took the permission of the Upamukhya Karyakari Adhikari, Mahila va Balvikas Vibhag, Zilla Parishad, Thane Zilla and requested their assistance in monitoring and assessing the health of the children before and after the implementation of this project.

After acquiring the necessary permission, this project was rolled out in a full-fledged manner. Dr. Niraj Dandekar and Dr. Yadnya Dandekar, who are Ayurvedic Practitioners running Arogyakiran in Panvel headed a proper medical camp. Ayurvedic medicines, supplementary food such as Gul-Chana Chikki and Kharik was distributed along with the milk and Ashwagandha powder to arrest the issue of malnutrition. We, as well as the doctors organized and conducted talks with villagers to help them understand the importance of good dietary habits and maintaining daily hygiene. A slight moderation in their mid-day meal along with all of the above mentioned measures helped us combat malnutrition to a large extent. When the doctors visited the village 6 months later, the weight of almost 52 children out of the 55 children had increased ... Imagine our joy when the doctor declared that 52 children had crossed over and were no longer malnourished!!



Dr. Niraj and Dr. Yadhya of Arogyakiran, Panvel conducting the Ayurvedic Medical Camp in Pezwadi.

"Village sanitation, domestic cleanliness, personal hygiene and health care have the first place and also full scope, the underlying idea being that this done there can be no disease." (Letter to D.D. Joshi, 1-8-1946; 85:105.). Borrowing from Gandhiji's idea on village sanitation we realized that we needed to go beyond.

Thus we decided to make Pezwadi a model village and not just stop at one goal of eradicating malnutrition. The first initiative was to provide the village with a regular drinking water supply through a water tank. 'Sauch Khaddaas' were also constructed to help drain the dirty, sewage water. To make the village an area free of open defecation, we took up the project of building 38 toilets at the cost of Rs.11,000 per toilet. Not an easy task! However, knowing that open defecation in a closely knit place leads to numerous health issues along with contaminating the nearby water body, we took up this daunting endeavor. After lot of fund raising events, publicity of the project through word of mouth, and such sustained efforts, by October 2018, we had built toilets for all the families in the village.

Pezwadi has been our 'Karma-Bhoomi' in terms of learning. We realized that just having a desire to help is not enough and that arbitrary decisions cannot be made about the plans of action. Certain processes needed to be in place.

Thus, our vision was streamlined into certain processes that have been practiced henceforth. Hereafter, our three major aims would be on the Three E's:

### 1. Eradicating Malnutrition

### 2. Encouraging Sanitation

### 3. Enabling Education

Thus, school bags, uniforms, school stationery, and toys and games for education and learning are distributed on a regular basis. Before the arrival of monsoons, Saaraakassh also ensures the upkeep of the school building by way of plastic sheets etc to keep the school free from leakages and dry.

Also to give an impetus for employment, Mahua Oil, honey and bamboo products are bought from the Pezwadi villagers, and then showcased in exhibitions and sold through word of mouth.



Saaraakassh Trustee, Shital Ravi exhibiting and selling adivasi village products in the exhibition **Samanvay** arranged by Rotary Group of Dombivli on every 2nd October.

It was in Pezwadi that we first organized the **'Urban-Rural Student Program'**, through which Urban children visited the village and helped teach the rural children through various activities such as drawing competitions, science experiments, drama skits, dance competitions and so forth. The takeaway from this experience for the urban children was no less. To actually see adivasi places with minimum facilities like Pezwadi does make anyone who experience it realize the immense opportunities and conveniences that one has in cities, allowing things to fall in perspective immediately. Guardian school of Dombivli was the first school to partner with Saaraakassh on this Student program. For the entire academic year 2018-2019, children of various grades visited Pezwadi with teachers and other school staff every month. Words fall short in expressing the hard work put in by all the teachers and students to make this program a success.



Guardian School, Dombivli students with Pezwadi Zilla Parisha School children in the Urban-Rural Student Program.

Continuing on the path of the third E, Enabling Education, Saaraakassh finally launched its dream project on 20th October, 2019: the P4 series- Pudchi Pidhi, Pudcha Paul, with the children of Pezwadi, undertaking the first Lifeskills workshop of the P4 series. To add a note here, Saaraakassh Trustee, Shital Ravi, holds a Post graduation degree in Counseling Psychology from Mumbai University and is also

the founder of Disha Counseling Center. Saaraakassh trustee, Ravi Narayanan too holds, a post graduation degree in Social psychology from University of Mumbai. Having conducted many Lifeskills workshops previously too it had been a dream project in the pipeline for long which finally got rolled out. Under the initiative of Vidya Daanam, the vision is to conduct a series of life skills workshops with the underprivileged adivasi children to help them develop better leadership skills, self confidence and an ability to face the world that lies beyond their remote and secluded environment, thus hoping to help them become part of the mainstream society seamlessly.



First Pudchi Pidhi Pudcha Paul Lifeskills workshop in action.

In many ways, Pezwadi has been our testing ground where we conducted many of our firsts, be it the life-skills program, urban-rural student program, building of 'Sauchh Khaddes and toilets, putting up big water tanks to store drinking water for the village, cleaning of wells before the monsoons, among many others. Even though we have moved on to our third village now, Pezwadi holds a dear place in our hearts and work goes on...



### 3. Village Karpatwadi:

Karpatwadi, is an Adivasi village which we usually used to pass by while going to Pezwadi. By and by, it became familiar to us as the Sarpanch used to come visiting to Pezwadi as also children from Karpatwadi used to join some of the Saaraakassh distribution programs done in Pezwadi school. With the growing connect with people from Karpatwadi, we realized that here was a village with a difference! Education and overall awareness of the Sarpanch (Nathu Pardhi) and Upa-Sarpanch (Chandar Rama Pardhi) made a sea of difference facilitating the Saaraakassh work that we wanted to start there.

It was indeed a pleasure to know that there was a Karpatwadi Gaon Sudhar Samiti which had been established with a few villagers on board and a bank account too had been opened. This samiti with the inputs of all the villagers came up with ideas to make their village a model village. Also with the passage of time and growing experience, we too had learnt our lessons. We had gotten more focussed to keep ourselves within the fold of our vision. Within the Saaraakassh framework we first began with the repairing of school toilets, common kitchen shed for Zilla Parishad school and Aanganwadi with all facilities and distribution of stationery and sports equipments etc to the ZP school.

While we were working on all this we came across the problem of Alcoholism in the village. Thus it was decided to arrange a program in the village for the same. On the decided day, the rain gods decided to send a huge shower of untimely rain. However though the whole place was damp and the stage too had become wet, it did not dampen the indomitable spirits of the villagers and the Saaraakassh team. On October 19th, 2019 a full-fledged program was conducted with cultural events by the villagers, children and our team as well, and a motivational speech by Shri Ranjan Rao on Alcoholism. We also had a demonstration and a talk on the benefits of doing daily Agnihotra to help purify the environment. The program ended with Sankirtan by none other than a budding team from Pezwadi (to whom we have donated musical instruments such as the harmonium, tabla, dholak, flute and mike systems). This was followed by a dinner for the entire village where we all sat and talked together under the moonlit night and could sense a spirit of

positivity already seeping in. With sustained efforts the Alcoholism rate has come down to a small extent, though much more work needs to be done on this front.

Next, was the Ayurvedic Medical camp for the villagers. Though malnutrition was not a problem here, the villagers especially the women were anemic and had health issues. A medical camp with two senior Ayurvedic doctors and two juniors was conducted on December 14th, 2019 for the villagers of Karpatwadi. Medicines were also distributed on the same day by the doctors.

The next big project undertaken was the eye camp. We were fortunate to team up with Essilor Vision Foundation for this event. Team from Optifocus, Pune did the work of getting all the required machinery, for the check up. We had a training session for the Saaraakassh team and a few enterprising villagers who would carry out the initial screening process. This was done over a 2 week period and on 26th January 2020 we had the mega eye camp. We covered a total of 8 villages in the camp and 250 people got their eyes tested after the initial screening of 1500 people in these 8 villages. It was a herculean task managing the crowd and 9 hours of hard work by the team of 3 doctors and 2 technicians. Spectacles were distributed free of cost on the same day and for a few they were sent after 10 days.



Eye Camp in progress.

On the request of the villagers, Saaraakassh has now taken up the task of building a Samaj hall and a Vithal Rakumai temple in the village. The work for this has begun already. The purpose of a Samaj hall is to have a place where meetings, bhajans, and the Life skills camps for the children could be conducted. Any place of prayer helps the community to congregate and have an exchange of positive ideas. Since there was no temple in the village, we felt that this would be a right step to keep the atmosphere of positivity and brotherhood amongst the villagers sustained.

While our work thus goes on, the whole world is gripped by the Pandemic Covid 19. As soon as the lockdown was announced, we realized that Karpatwadi and the surrounding villages were completely isolated and would be without any means of food as most of these villagers work as daily wage labourers. Thus in this lockdown period, they would be in urgent need of ration supplies. Saaraakassh appealed to its well-wishers and donors to help in these challenging times. With the help of many such good Samaritans, Saaraakassh supplied groceries worth Rs.1200 per family, for immediate relief to help them tide through these tough times.



Sarpanch Shri Chandar distributing needs a noun in one of the villages on behalf of Saaraakassh.

In the first week of April 2020, Saaraakassh reached out to many adivasi families across five villages and in the coming days was able to reach out to many more such villages. In May 2020, Saaraakassh covered 11 such villages. This would not have been possible without the tireless hardwork done by Shri Nathu and Shri Chandar of Karpatwadi who spearheaded the ration supply distribution across the 11 villages. The grocery distribution was done over 4 months so as to sustain the villagers over these troubled times.

Here is a village which has shown us how much can be achieved by simple unity and team work. Beautiful learnings that we are learning from our fellow adivasi brothers and sisters. Thus goes on the work in our third village...

We hope to now achieve what Gandhiji had envisioned for an ideal village or village Swaraj, that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is necessary.

"That village may be regarded as reformed, where everybody wears khadi, which produces all the khadi it needs which uses only oil produced in indigenous oil-presses, which consumes only jaggery manufactured in the village itself or in its neighbourhood and only hand-milled flour and hand-pounded rice; the village, in other words, where the largest possible number of village industries are flourishing, in which nobody is illiterate, where the roads are clean, there is a fixed place for evacuation, the wells are clean, there is harmony among the different communities, and untouchability is completely absent, in which everybody gets cow's milk, ghee etc., in moderate quantities, in which nobody is without work, and which is free from quarrels and thefts, and in which the people abide by the sevak's advice in all matters. This is possible in the existing conditions. I cannot of course say about the time required." (Letter to Munnalal Shah, 4-4-1941; 73:421).

Yes, Saaraakassh too does not know the time that may be required but it has definitely started taking its steps in this direction hoping to achieve this dream someday soon.





# *Youth, Communities and Swaraj – A Gandhian Lens*

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We are currently living through unprecedented times – an era filled with collective human experiences of trauma, loss, anxieties, fear and hopes. The pandemic has upended the world, triggered partly by the insatiable greed of humankind for more comfort and wealth and a conquering attitude towards Earth. Competition, rather than collaboration, became the coin of the realm. There has been a cavalier encroachment of the spaces of other living creatures. This condescension brought on this pandemic and with it, floundering economies, helpless governments, collapsing institutions, mounting mortality and global gloom and doom. It created massive migrations, deepening the marginalization and destitution of many vulnerable communities around the globe.

In such a moment of complete rupture, as we seek inspiring leaders to pull us out of this apocalypse. To help us bring about the much-needed change in the way we conduct our lives, who else to turn to but Mahatma Gandhi and his principles of Hind Swaraj? This timeless document, written by Gandhi in 1909, still stands as one of the finest blueprints for different civilizational practices.

**Hind Swaraj** is a commentary that is both a scholarly argument as well as an opinion anchored in few eternal truths that Gandhi believed in and lived. Some of the principles he talked about in that document are the fundamental principles of the working of Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR), as well as the foundation of nearly all PUKAR's programs and projects.

*Hence, I take the liberty of quoting some of his thoughts, his ideas, his principles and how deeply PUKAR's work is influenced by it and how PUKAR has tried to implement those ideas in practice.*

One thing this pandemic has taught us is that we cannot go on living the way we have been for the past 200 years. The modern industrialized world's practices, our arrogant exploitation of Earth's precious resources for our 'Greed and not our Needs', the onslaught of globalization and the deep inequalities created by its systems, the failure of economic and political systems to provide the basic necessities of life to every human being, as Gandhi had cautioned about in **Hind Swaraj**, the destitution of the marginalized and the exclusion of the rural poor – all these factors have brought us into this mess in the first place. The time has come to think, alter and gain "Swaraj" from our greed and our exploitative and lazy attitudes and to learn to build a mutually respectful relationship with Earth and all her creatures.

For Gandhi, **"It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves!"** (Pradhan, 1).

And for Gandhi, the basic aim of education should be to **"Bring our senses under our control and to help imbibe ethical behaviour in our life"** (Pradhan, 1).

At PUKAR, we believe that we can learn to rule ourselves only when we learn to understand ourselves as individuals. That is the principle we have used very successfully over the past 14 years in PUKAR's flagship program called Youth Fellowship. This 11-month long Fellowship creates a cadre of Community-Based Youth Leadership from five districts around Mumbai covering 26+ Million people. It empowers youth with participatory research skills to conduct research on problems in their own communities and come up with community-based solutions, thus becoming **changemakers in their own communities**. Youth originating mostly from subaltern communities are accepted as participants but only as a group.

The Youth Fellowship learning process has followed an alternative pedagogy of Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR), the mantra being 'Karake Sikho'. **Sustainable communities form a big part of SDGs and hence**

**occupy centrality of space in discourses in every field.** This has only strengthened our resolve to foster and scale up the Community Based Participatory Action Research.

Professor Arjun Appadurai, the Founder of PUKAR, in his seminal essay “Right to Research”, argues that Community Based Participatory Action Research “*democratizes research, gives credence to community based indigenous knowledge and enables the community members to have a voice in envisioning of their own future, thus making the communities sustainable*” (Appadurai 2006). This also devolves power and places it into the hands of local communities, urban or rural, which Gandhi strongly advocates in ***Hind Swaraj***.

Decentralization of power and inclusivity forms critical part of his argument in ***Hind Swaraj*** when he talks about villages. Gandhi also strongly advocates a self-reflective, inward-looking attitude towards one’s own identity in ***Hind Swaraj***. In PUKAR, this aspect forms the first step that all the participants have to take as soon as they join PUKAR’s Youth Fellowship.

Writing an autobiography and looking at one’s own life as a bystander is a difficult, yet essential, first activity that each youth is encouraged to undertake. Resolving struggles of layered identities through self-reflection and writing one’s own biography to know oneself better is usually an eye-opener for many. Engaging with prevalent social issues such as caste, religion, gender, language, region and cultural practices, reflecting upon one’s own space and location in their communities as youth, leaders, consumers and aspirants, and learning to negotiate all these positions under the prevalent social construct, are both frightening and liberating experiences for the Barefoot Researchers.

The realization that in many areas some of them are privileged, but that even victims of some social structures can be perpetrators within other social categories, especially in areas of gender and environment is a sobering thought for many. With the help of the expert resource persons, the ever-smiling Facilitators and Alu-mentors, the Barefoot Researchers walk through and reflect upon a maze of complexities. In addition, they are enabled with some of the most critical skills that are necessary to live a successful life in the 21st century. These include



problem location and problem solving, teamwork and cooperation, collective decision making and consensus building, critical thinking and empathy, many of the qualities Gandhi talks about in *Hind Swaraj*. He gives particular importance to local small technologies. In YFP that is exactly what is fostered. *Local problems, local small solutions, based upon evidence collected locally by the local youth and implemented locally.*

Let me share with you a few stories, of resolute-minded youth that were empowered through the Youth Fellowship and how they changed the lives of the people from their communities through their small but significant actions.

### **The Sexual Harassment Faced in Local Trains:**

A group of young women who travelled by Mumbai's local train network to their colleges decided to explore the sexual harassment they all faced. In addition to interviewing many of their colleagues and attended colleges in the same vicinities as theirs, they also mapped and photo-documented the areas where they faced the most harassment.

Some stations and neighbourhoods around these stations stood out. Many of those areas shared one thing in common: the lack of enough lighting. The women shared this research and these maps with the railway authorities, requesting them to increase the lighting in these areas. Small improvements led to large dividends.

### **Improving Connectivity of A Village for Decreasing Deaths and Morbidity:**

A youth group from Amboli conducted research on health mortality in their village. They found that a large number of deaths and non-institutional deliveries took place on the roads. People had to wait at the railway crossing gate since there was no overhead bridge. With local trains passing by frequently, people's lives were at risk. They shared this evidence with the local corporator who in turn shared the information with the respective authorities, who finally sanctioned a budget for an overhead bridge, thus bringing relief to their community.

### **To Continue My Education:**

We had a spirited group of Adivasi youth from Kalomboli village. To reach this village, one has to first reach Khopoli by train, then take a bus for half an hour that drops one off at the bottom of a hilly region. From there, one has to endure an hour-long uphill walk to reach the village.

The village has a primary school up to the 4th grade. The entire village becomes vacant during summer since there is no drinking water. The villagers come down to the bottom of the hill to the brick kilns for work. Children who wish to continue their higher education have to walk to the school located in another village, which is a walk over a difficult terrain.

The PUKAR youth researched and documented the villagers' plight through photography that was taught to them at Youth Fellowship workshops. They used a camera, rather than smartphones, to take pictures. After the research and documentation was completed, they took the data to the bus service company and pleaded that the bus should come all the way to the bottom of the hill and take them to the other village so that at least a few of them could continue their education. The bus service staff agreed, which was a huge achievement for these youth.

We have many such stories to share of the 5,000-odd youth that we have trained in 14 years and the over 400 communities we have reached. Each of these stories echoes the same principle that Gandhi reiterated many times:

Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest person whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him or her. Will she or he gain anything by it? Will it restore the person to a control over his or her own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Gandhi always emphasized the importance of self-reliance and had deep-seated respect for manual labour. In one of his speeches during his tour in 1934 he

vowed, “We have to become speechless manual labourers living in the villages”. He believed that unless one does the manual labour oneself, one may never understand the efforts and pain behind it, and one may never learn to respect it and value it. Keeping this cardinal principle in mind, in PUKAR the entire team decided that we would undertake the cleaning of our office by ourselves. No outsider should clean the space that we use every day. So, once a month on a designated morning, all of us gather at the office, with brooms and cleaning material and water buckets. Over the next four–six hours, every nook and cranny of the office is cleaned, including the toilets. Listening to music and eating snacks in between, we make a joyous team outing of this activity and not only enjoy it but also value it. Gandhi’s influence does not ever seem to leave our horizons.

Another area where we have followed Gandhi is in our ability to build collaborations. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi talked specifically about “Curbing unnecessary competitiveness”. At PUKAR, this principle has been observed minutely. In everything we do, propose and implement, a spirit of collaboration and cooperation and equal treatment for all are encouraged. We have always believed strongly that synergy is the fuel that allows ordinary people to achieve extra-ordinary accomplishments. This word occupies a significant space in PUKAR’s organizational principles, from the daily functioning of the teams to research conducted by our Barefoot Researchers in teams of 10–12 youth.

Group work remains an important part of PUKAR projects. We believe that by working in teams, we learn to respect diversity of opinions and differences, resolve conflicts, learn to build consensus, gather the skills necessary to foster inclusion and democracy. We pool our strengths, capabilities, talents and creativity so that as a collective, we can achieve exponentially rather than individually. Our efforts are not just additive but multiplied. In each of our projects, this notion is fostered and executed with ease. Believing strongly that ground-breaking, inclusive partnerships will lead to synergies in every sphere of development will give measurable outcomes for the communities we work with.

So, where did we build our partnerships? All over. From the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, (MCGM) to the BMN College and Khalsa College of Mumbai, which cater mostly to lower middleclass students belonging mostly to minority

groups. From the prestigious Tata Institution of Social Sciences of Mumbai to globally renowned academic institutions like Harvard University, University of Chicago and Max Planck Institute of Germany. The main focus of these collaborations has always remained empowerment of youth through knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes.

Municipal schools draw some of the most deprived students from mostly migrant and marginalized communities. They lack information, knowledge and exposure on varied fronts, leading to a deep inferiority complex within many of them. PUKAR decided to address this issue by partnering with MCGM. The main focus of this partnership was to empower adolescent girl students of 7th and 8th grades with knowledge of puberty, menstrual health and hygiene, gender identity and gender violence. This triangulation between MCGM school students, communities & PUKAR lead to exhilarating outcomes not just for the girls and their mothers but also for our team members, who felt equally empowered with the spirit of disseminating knowledge.

Our collaboration with Harvard University led to exploring Social Determinants of Health in an informal settlement. This in turn led to increasing the immunization rates of children from 32% to 89.6% over 18 months with door-to-door education of mothers and collaboration with MCGM to bring health camps to this settlement. This research helped us to publish seven important papers published in peer reviewed international journals **that are cited more often than we had ever imagined.** (available on [www.pukar.org.in](http://www.pukar.org.in))

Finally, one of the most difficult yet most rewarding partnership emerged between PUKAR's E-Governance team and rural tribal youth of 40+ villages in the tribal district of Palghar. This partnership has been difficult to execute mainly due to its massive scale, the hilly and inapproachable terrain and poor connectivity between the villages scattered across 150 kms. The PUKAR team members overcame all these hurdles with their resolute minds and determination. They inhabited the area for months, kept an ear to the ground through their Adivasi E-Sevaks, and were agile on the feet as the situations demanded.

The synergy of this partnership has brought about a revolutionary turnaround in the capacities of the rural population. The knowledge of the 73rd Amendment delivered to each and every household, the importance of the participation of tribal in the working of Gram panchayats, their demand of good governance from the Gram panchayat by raising their voices in Gramsabhas; all of this has been a new and exhilarating experience for the tribal villagers.

The schemes specifically created for tribals by the Government of India are being delivered to their doorsteps by our trained local E-Sevaks. The villagers get their Aadhar cards, voter registration cards, land ownership records and marriage certificates in their own villages without having to make multiple trips to the local district office. This not only saves them money and time but also spares them the humiliation they face at the hands of the officers, bankers, and office staff. This gift of dignity is beyond any measurable value to these tribal communities – which they have conveyed to their local E-Sevaks over and over again. And in this process, the villagers have also been empowered to attend the Self-Rule that Gandhi so deftly advocated.

**According to Gandhi, there is a symbiotic relationship between swaraj as 'self-rule' of individual Indians and swaraj as the home-rule or self- government for the Indian people.**

Through such partnerships, we have been collaborators, not competitors. We have been inclusive not exclusive. We have created synergies that are much larger than the sum total of our partners and us. The real beneficiaries of these energies and synergies are not just all of us but the marginalized and disenfranchised, repressed and oppressed, the ostracized and excluded, voiceless and invisible citizens of our country – the millions of people Gandhi cared for the most! He upheld that individuals can be free if India were free.

To Gandhi, the recognition of the responsibility of duty was the very essence of freedom.

For Gandhi freedom did not come by exploiting others, for such exploitation is merely power in the narrow sense. Instead, freedom is about making choices

that go beyond the self without excluding any person or community. Freedom is ecological.

That is what we have been trying to inculcate in the community-based youth. To look beyond themselves to their communities, cities, countries and nature. As social beings, we must learn to respect the importance of communities as social units and their space in shaping our lives. Social media cannot replace social communities. Technology that creates band-aid solutions but fails to ask questions as to why the situation has been created in the first place cannot become a panacea for our problems. It can complement our efforts but not replace it.

In today's interdependent world that has been capsized by a tiny micro-organism, connected by the internet and yet divided by increasing inequality, endangered by cyclones, tsunamis, floods, drought, forest fires, hunger and malnutrition, and steeped in the mirage of technology as the ultimate solution, we need Gandhi's ideas of Swaraj and Freedom.

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*Raag Gandhi: The Musical  
Community of the  
Mahatma*

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“Music does not proceed from the throat alone. There is music of mind, of the senses and of the heart.”

Someone once asked the Mahatma, “Mahatmaji don’t you have any liking for music?”

Gandhi replied, “If there was no music and no laughter in me, I would have died of this crushing burden of my work.”

## **Introduction**

The Mahatma that we know as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has his presence engraved on every path he ever crossed, every life he touched, every community, country or, to be precise, he changed the perspective of humankind and opened doors of an awakening we are still short of fully assessing and admiring. The world remembers him as a mascot of human rights, crusader of the freedom struggle, the prophet of Satya & Ahimsa (Truth & Non-Violence). All these are at the core of Bapu’s essence and presence, equating Gandhi with just one of these is limiting his immeasurable greatness. When you dive deep in the ocean you discover pearls, our journey of Raag Gandhi has taken us on a path of enlightenment of Gandhi the Artist or, more precisely, Gandhi the Musician.



## **Gandhi the Artist**

“...there are so many superstitions rife about me that it has now become almost impossible for me to overtake those who have been spreading them. As a result, my friends’ only reaction is almost invariably a smile when I claim I am an artist myself.” (Roy 1950, 65-66)

When one tries to trace the imprints of Gandhi, the man who had an eye for beauty and aesthetics, who had unparalleled sense of the healing touch of music (as is evident by the opening statement of the article), who wrote a prayer in prose (‘Hey Namrata ke Sagar’), who wrote and translated hundreds of volumes in English and Gujarati, we discover an unexplored dimension of his personality. We come across a different man. We meet Gandhi the Artist.

## **Gandhi the Lyricist**

In 1934, Gandhiji wrote a prose poem as an answer to a question on prayer and God with its opening lines as –

Lord of Humility,

Dwelling in the little Pariah hut

Help us to search for Thee throughout...

In 1969, the Government of Maharashtra released this song in Hindi to mark 100 years of Gandhiji’s birth. The Hindi version goes by the name ‘Hey Namrata ke Sagar’ (Chandvankar, 2012). This song has been the opening verse of Raag Gandhi performed by us throughout the nation in the past couple of years. This song signifies the yearning of Gandhi to strike a balance between Spirituality and Art. So we consider it to be the cornerstone of the journey of Gandhi on the path of finding the healing touch of Art that soothes one’s soul, relieves us of our worldly burdens and takes us to a land where Art and Music elevates us to become one

with the Almighty. By submitting oneself to the Creator we bring peace, and Gandhi chose Music be the path and medium of this submission.

## **Gandhi's Music (bhajans) as a catalyst to bring Religious Harmony, Compassion and establishing Secularism**

“We see Hindu and Mussalman musicians sitting cheek by jowl and partaking in musical concerts. When shall we see the same fraternal union in other affairs of our life?” (Neuman, 2011)

Gandhi wondered what can be the common platform that could bring people from different strata of society together; he found his answer in music. To him music had the charm and silent power of binding the otherwise divided society. The lyrics of his favourite bhajan is a testimony of that – ‘Vaishnav Jan to Tene Kahiye je peed parayi Jane re’ (One who is a Vaishnav-devotee of Vishnu, knows the pain of others). By placing importance on this, Gandhi emphasized on compassion for fellow humans as the only criteria to judge oneself. So, Gandhi's Music is all about establishing equality among the socially, economically, politically differing individuals and bringing harmony.

**i. Africa: The Tolstoy Farm:** Gandhi's tryst with the Ashram and a unique lifestyle of self-reliance, the experiment of bringing the deprived together, began with the establishment of Tolstoy Farm in 1910 (Gandhi Museum, Rajkot). Gandhiji attributed his success in the struggle against racial discrimination prevalent in South Africa to his experiments at Tolstoy Farm. It is here that he began the practice of reciting religious hymns (bhajan) in the evening prayer meets held at 7pm every day (Bhana, 1975). This bring to the fore the fact that Gandhiji believed in Spiritualism as a must for attaining 'cooperative commonwealth' and he chose his bhajan sandhya meet as a tool in attaining his goal.

Another noteworthy aspect of these prayer meets was that it had prayers from all religions and prayers emphasizing humanity rather than devotion to a particular religion. The idea of accommodating every religion and establishing a secular

environment was an experiment that helped Gandhiji later during the freedom struggle of India.

**ii. Gandhi's experiment with violin:** It is a known fact that Gandhi found solace in music; however, it is less known that he actually bought a violin and tried learning music formally (Orwell, 1949). Because of the call of duty, he could not continue with it as passion or profession. But his attempt at learning music qualifies him as an enthusiastic music lover who fell just short of and had the yearning for being a disciple of music.

**iii. Gandhian Music:** Gandhiji started a community life in Africa, and the Shramik Prayer was a part of it. He published a collection of hymns that were sung as "Proverbs Poem". Along with the characteristics of Pragma located in Gita, he started singing at the time of prayer. Prayer meetings and music became a symbolic Gandhian activity in the pre as well as post independent India. The songs selected for the prayer meetings were popular bhajans, nazms with musical and melodic appeal. Gandhiji himself deliberated on the raag and rendition tunes of the same (Subramanian, 2020). Narayan Moreshwar Khare (1922), the music teacher and musician at the Sabarmati Ashram, compiled and published Ashram Bhajnavali, the bible of Gandhian Music, reflecting the secular fabric of the prayers, raags, moods, tunes selected carefully to connect with the masses. As the life of the ashrams bloomed, so did the collection of hymns and bhajans, and in the process this gave birth to a different genre of Music-Literature that healed the distressed and helped everyone cross the class & religion divide to become one whole. Music became the thread to hold the pearls of different origins together.

## **Raag Gandhi: Our journey in the world of Gandhi's Symphony**

The team started the journey of discovering a single musical show on Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary with the title "BAA-BAPU 150- *Sangeet mien Gandhi* (Gandhi in Music)". This took us to a path untraveled, visiting libraries across Mumbai,

meeting Gandhians, trying to understand the lifestyle of Gandhi Ashrams. What astonished us was the hundreds of books of poems, ghazals, bhajans and every form of literature written on The Mahatma and his ideology. It was like we got a treasure trove in disguise. And this was meant to be, as we were destined to bring Gandhi to people again, but this time, with our music. We not only found Gandhi Music, we became spellbound by the great symphony that Gandhi is!

**i. Literary Expedition:** The first step was to look for the literature we can present and what we came across was a sea of literature in different languages, written under different genres, published in different states, even countries. Such is the legacy of Gandhi – the phenomenon that the countless words still fall short of comprehending completely. Mukhtar Khan did the first draft of the research for the project.

**ii. Bhajans & Nazms (Poems):** Among everything we found in exploration of these writings, we decided to include ‘Hey Namrata ke Sagar’ written by Gandhiji himself as it shows the spiritual height of a person who was a karmayogi and a leader of humanity too. ‘Vaishnav Jana to’, the bhajan that was part of daily prayers at ashram, was also sung by Narayan Khare when Gandhiji ventured on the historic Dandi Yatra (Lal, 2014). The ultimate definition of being human rather than just living as a human being, it is synonymous to any Gandhian bhajan sandhya. A poem written in Urdu by Allama Iqbal ‘Lab pe aati hai Dua’ that gives message of devoting one’s life to learning and enlightenment and ‘Allah tero Naam Ishwar tero Naam’ was included to reflect the Gandhian idea of Sarvadharm Sambhav (Equality of all religions). Apart from this many devotional songs, prayers & hymns were included in various shows depending on the region of shows and the local languages of the venue.

**iii. Gandhian Principles in Music:** The biggest challenge as well as inspiration was to draw a parallel to the famous Gandhi Katha popularized by the greatest storyteller on Gandhi, Shri Narayan Desai. The essence of our presentation of the principles were influenced greatly by *Gandhi Katha* (Desai, 2011). *Mrutyuanjyi* (1969), a collection of poetic literature on Gandhi in 12 languages, edited by Bhavani Prasad Mishr, was a gem we found. A poem that gained immense popularity during this musical journey is ‘Shakti Ahimsa Mein Jitni woh Nahi Shashtra Hunkar

Mein' (Nonviolence is a greater power, than any weapon or war cry), written by Shri Poddar Ramavtar. It is a testimony to the fact that Gandhian Music is not just about the musical notes but about how it reflects and propagates Gandhian ideology. The struggles of Gandhi in personal, public, spiritual life and his determination to fight alone for the truth was presented through Gurudev's '*Ekla Chalo Re*' (Keep walking alone). Across the spectrum of different languages and dialects, what remained constant was Gandhi the teacher who practiced what he preached come what may.

**iv. Kasturba Gandhi** – A shadow that showed the path: Kasturba Gandhi, the Mahatma's soulmate, shadow, an unsung freedom fighter, the functional head of ashrams, started Satyagraha even before it was popularized by Gandhi. Gandhi believed her to be practicing nonviolence in life (Basu, 2011). As we were celebrating 150 years of Baa Bapu, poems and songs were written and performed to pay homage to her.

**v. Writings worth a Mention:** Excerpts of 'Bapu', a poetic narration of Gandhi's life, written by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar (1948) was used to narrate the show poetically. Literature of Sheri Bhopali, Dr. Masood Hussain, Majaz Lucknowi, Balkrishna Rao, and others were used to bring balance and meaning to the Musical. Writings of Hridayesh Mayank and R K Paliwal were presented too, who remained an unflinching support and encouragement to the idea that Raag Gandhi is!

**vi. Fresh Perspective, Fresh Tunes:** Bringing Gandhi to the young generation was a challenge and so we decided to use a few renowned and mostly fresh literature tuned by the young singer, composer and music director Faraz Khan, who not only composed the whole show but also presented it in his velvet voice to mesmerize the audience, ranging from 5 years of age to as old as people who grew up in Gandhi's presence. We started with a show that became a life mission for its crew. Delivering, spreading, professing, propagating and understanding Gandhi, to learn, unlearn and re-learn what Gandhism is through the lens of music.

**vii. Harmony of Classical and Modern Instrumentals:** While keeping the traditional Classic Music of Gandhian era intact the young team of teenagers and musicians in their early 20s like Shikha Srivastav (Singer), Utkarsh Jadhav (Flutist), Roshan Gayekar (Tabla), Joshua Urunkar (Guitarist), Aman Jadhav (Synthesizer) brought a breath of fresh air to the music that could connect and appeal to younger audiences. The soothing tunes and some upbeat western music - reinventing and reincarnating Gandhian Music to bring Gandhi to the Gen Next - is another aim of our project.

**viii. Analogy of Tunes used:**

Ashram Bhaj nawali (Khare, 1928) has mentioned specific ragas under which the rendition of bhajans are to be done. What is noteworthy here is that the tunes and ragas were handpicked and for it to be authentically a musical even tunes were mentioned in writing. Raags originate from 'thaats' (Manna, 2016). Most of the bhajans are in Raag Khamaj, Raag Des, Raag Kaafi followed by Raag Bhairav and Bhairavi. Raag Des and Raag Khamaj are from same thaata called "Khamaj Thaata", that has the 'ras' (mood) of praising. Apart from ras the thaata also represents the folk texture of presentation. Thus, the music Gandhi preferred were praising the lord, connecting the people by using music close to the folk culture, thus creating connection with masses and finally serving them the message of unity, equality and humanity with the carefully picked lyrics of hymns, poems and narratives.

**ix. From Gandhi Bhajan to Gandhi ko Gaana (Singing Gandhi):** Our Experience of interactions with Gandhian Shri Sanjay Tula, Shri Kiran Chavda, Vice Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapeeth Shri Anamikbhai Shah and our stay at Lokniketan, Ratanpur and Gandhi Ashram, Zilia, opened a new window of understanding Gandhian lifestyle, where music is a part of daily routine. It made us realize that Gandhi is not just about a few bhajans that the world knows, it is a whole genre of music to be explored. As Shri Sanjay Tula Ji aptly said 'Gandhi ko Gaana' (Singing Gandhi) is a genre, and our exploration of this genre will not be possible without these greats enlightening our path.

## Raag Gandhi – Today & Tomorrow:

What remains constant and fails to adapt, perishes and decays slowly but surely. Any legacy however great it is, if not reinvented, redesigned for the next generations may become obsolete and may be not accepted at all by the future generations. Gandhism is an eternally accepted lifestyle, an ideology based on *My Experiments with Truth*. The name of his autobiography, carefully chosen, evokes the idea of continuous evolution of the ways in which Gandhi can be taught tomorrow. Gandhi is not meant to be only in history books, he is to be instrumental in understanding today with his prism of truth and more importantly in moulding the tomorrow. Keeping the essence pure, presenting it through the medium of music – what Gandhi believed to be harmony and equality – the only leveler in a world full of inequalities, is the purpose and mission of our Journey that is RAAG GANDHI.

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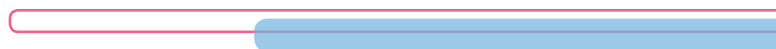
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# *Gandhi and Mani Bhavan*

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**Abstract:**

This narrative attempts to give a brief description of Gandhiji's association with Mani Bhavan from 1917 to 1934. Mani Bhavan was the nerve centre in the city of Bombay (now Mumbai) for Gandhiji's activities and movements. It was from here that Gandhiji launched the first nationwide satyagraha of Rowlett Act, started Khilafat and Non-operation movements. Today it stands as a memorial to Gandhiji's life and teachings.

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The most distinguished address in a quiet locality of Gamdevi in Mumbai is the historic building, Mani Bhavan - the house where Gandhiji stayed whenever he was in Mumbai from 1917 to 1934. Mani Bhavan belonged to Gandhiji's friend Revashankar Jhaveri who was a jeweller by profession and elder brother of Dr Pranjivandas Mehta - Gandhiji's friend from his student days in England. Gandhiji and Revashankarbhai shared the ideology of non-violence, truth and satyagraha and this was the bond of their empathetic friendship. Gandhiji respected Revashankarbhai as his elder brother as a result the latter was ever too happy to host him at his house.

I will be mentioning Mumbai as Bombay in my text as the city was then known.

Mani Bhavan was converted into a Gandhi museum in 1955. Dr Rajendra Prasad, then The President of India did the honours of inaugurating the museum. The walls resonate with the history of Indian freedom struggle and stand as testimony to the important events of Gandhi's personal life and his political activities.

From Mani Bhavan, Gandhiji launched the first nationwide satyagraha of Rowlett Act, started Khilafat and Non-operation movements. It was from here that Gandhiji conferred with his colleagues and inspired his followers the techniques of non-violence and satyagraha. The place from where he shaped the destiny of the Indian freedom struggle.

It was in Mani Bhavan that Gandhiji first started taking goat milk. In 1918 during Kheda Satyagraha, Gandhiji was suffering from a bad case of dysentery and his health was deteriorating. He was asked to consult a doctor in Bombay. Revashankarbhai invited Gandhiji to stay with him Mani Bhavan to recuperate and rest.

In Bombay, Dr Dalal advised Gandhiji that to regain his strength he needs to take milk. But Gandhiji did not agree with the doctor's recommendation. He explained to Dr Dalal that he has taken a vow of not taking cow's or buffalo's milk because of the cruel method of 'Phookan' for milking the cow or buffalo. Kasturba was standing by the bed listening to the conversation between doctor and Gandhiji, promptly she mediated, "But surely you cannot have an objection to goat's milk then?" (1). The doctor immediately agreed that taking goat milk is adequate to recoup his energy. Soon Gandhiji's health was regained and he was strong enough to undergo surgery for fissures.

In the same year, Gandhiji's daughter-in-law Gulab, wife of his oldest son Harilal, had died after a brief illness. While recuperating in Mani Bhavan, Gandhiji invited Harilal's children – Rasik, Kanti, Rami and Manu to spend a few days with him and Kasturba. This brief period of convalescing and rest with grandchildren in Mani Bhavan is best described by Gandhiji in his letter to Harilal written on February 23, 1919, "Just as I was about to start this letter, I had to hold a court. The accused was Rasik, and the complainant an innocent dog. The latter declared by his wailing that he had been assaulted by someone. I discovered that the guilty party was

Rasik. The accused admitted his guilt and confessed previous offences as well. I thought of Lord Krishna and Shishupal. Shri Krishnachandra had forgiven a hundred offences, of the latter. And so the court had compassion and forgave the accused, Rasik, five offences, warning him at the same time that, if he repeated the offence, it would not be forgiven and that he would be made to realize, in his own person, the dog's suffering when stoned. As I write this, Kantilal is holding the inkstand. He and Ramibehn read the letter as I proceed and correct me. The accused, too, is here, meekly standing by the bed. Manubai interrupts now and then to give us the benefit of her laughter. And now she has started crying, wanting to climb up the bed. Though I am confined to bed, you will see from the foregoing that my health can pass as good." (2)

Gandhi was of the view that spinning charkha was the most economical and simple solution to get rid of poverty and to make Indians self-sufficient by spinning their own cloth. He wanted to learn spinning. One day when a carder was passing by Mani Bhavan, "Gandhiji sent for him. He agreed to card cotton for making slivers but demanded exorbitant wages. Gandhiji was willing to pay any price. A spinning class was opened in Mani Bhavan. Gandhiji was the most ardent pupil of the class. (3) Gandhiji wrote to Gangaben, from Mani Bhavan on June 15, 1919- "A school for teaching spinning has started from here Mani Bhavan today. It will work everyday from 12 to 3." (4) People from all strata of society joined the charkha classes which were started in Mani Bhavan. In a letter to Chhaganlal on July 14, 1919, Gandhiji wrote, "Today Lady Tata, Lady Petit and Mrs Jehangir came over to learn spinning ... I don't know how it happens but women have taken to spinning as a fish takes to water." (5) To encourage more people to learn charkha and make the spinning process easy, Revashankarbhai announced: "the prize of Rs 5000 to anyone inventing the portable spinning wheel of indigenous components, as far as possible which could take on 10 spindles at a time". (6)

Encouraged by the response from the people, Gandhiji wrote, "Revashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri has at my request expressed his wish to give a prize of one thousand rupees to the writer of the best essay on the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar. The essay should trace the history of the destruction of the industry and discuss the possibility of its revival. Further terms will be announced

in the next issue.” (7). From then on, the charkha became a symbol of self-sufficiency and freedom.

## **1919 and Satyagraha against Rowlatt Act**

1919 was a very important year for Gandhiji and India. In February 1919, Rowlatt Bill was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in London which curbed the liberties of Indians. (meant govt can arrest any person without a trial suspected to have anti-British activities and strict control over the press.) Gandhi felt that this Bill was a severe blow to the freedom and rights of an individual. He called a nationwide Satyagraha or passive resistance against the Rowlatt Act or Black Act as it was known in India. Thus “the first step that shook the mighty British Empire was taken here ( Mani Bhavan).” (8)

Gandhi gave a call that 6th April 1919 should be observed as Satyagraha Day against the Rowlatt Act. It was a day of national humiliation and mourning. Gandhi urged people to keep fast and take the pledge of Civil Disobedience on that day. The day was known as Black Sunday. “On 4th April 1919, the poster of the ‘Black Sunday’ appeared in The Bombay Chronicle. Directions (and the poster both presumably drafted by Gandhi) were also given to the demonstrators to observe 6th April as ‘a day of humiliation and prayer and also of mourning by reason of the Delhi tragedy.’” (9)

Early morning of 6th April Gandhiji walked from Mani Bhavan to Chowpatty to observe Black Sunday by taking bath in the sea, offering prayers and observing the fast. He was the first to arrive on the scene.

To defy the Rowlatt Act, “Gandhi as the President of the Satyagraha Sabha and D. D. Sathye, Umar Sobani and Shankerlal Banker as its secretaries, had appealed to people to make copies of the prohibited literature themselves and making them freely available to the people.”(10)

On 7th April, the day after 'Black Sunday', Gandhi published a newspaper Satyagrahi, in defiance against the Indian Press Act. It was published by Mani Bhavan. The paper was the size of half a sheet. The Editor was: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and the address given was Laburnum Road, Gamdevi, Bombay. The price of the paper was one 'pice'. On top of the paper was written, 'Please read, copy and circulate among friends; and also request them to copy and circulate further'. On the same day from Mani Bhavan Gandhiji sent a copy of 'Satyagrahi' with a note to Mr F.C. Griffith, the Commissioner of Police Bombay, "Dear Mr Griffith, May I send you a copy of the unregistered newspaper issued today by me as its Editor? Yours sincerely, M. K. GANDHI." (11)

The enthusiastic support from the people of Bombay made this hartal a complete success.

It was during his stay in Mani Bhavan in 1919 that he took over Young Indian and Navajivan weeklies in English and Gujarati respectively. (12)

## **Non-Cooperation Movement**

In 1920, Gandhiji decided to start the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British Government. He asked the Indians to relinquish their titles, resign from government jobs, asked the parents to withdraw their children from government schools, boycott foreign clothes, councils and courts as a mark of protest. To put into action the scheme of non-cooperation, Gandhiji returned the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal, granted to him for his humanitarian work in South Africa.

"In his letter dated 22nd June 1920 to the Viceroy, written from Mani Bhavan, Gandhi stated that the Muslims and the Hindus as a whole had lost 'faith in British justice and honour'. Under the circumstances, non-cooperation was the only dignified and constitutional way." (13).

On 1st August 1920, the Non-Cooperation Movement was to start with hartals and fasts. On the same day, Bal Gangadhar Tilak died in Bombay. From Mani Bhavan

Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, "Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is no more. It is difficult to believe him as dead. He was so much part of the people. No man of our times had the hold on the masses that Mr Tilak had. The devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of his people. His word was a law among thousands. A giant among men has fallen. The voice of the lion is hushed." (14). Gandhiji announced to collect Rs 1 Crore towards Tilak Swaraj Fund within a year.

The Prince of Wales was to arrive in India in 1921. To advocate for non-cooperation movement, the Congress Working Committee meeting passed a resolution, "on the day of the landing of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, there should be a general hartal throughout India; and as to the effective boycott of any public welcome to His Royal Highness during his visit to the different cities, the Working Committee leaves the arrangements in the hands of respective Provincial Congress Committee." (15). The Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay on 17th November 1921. People were asked to observe complete *hartal* that day by boycotting the functions held in honour of the Prince of Wales and attending the public meeting of a bonfire of foreign clothes at Elphinstone Mills compound.

On the morning of 17th November, Gandhiji addressed the public meeting of the bonfire of foreign clothes at Elphinstone Mills compound. He appealed to the people to be peaceful and follow *swadeshi* to win *Swaraj* and then lit the bonfire of foreign clothes. This was the third bonfire, the previous two were held on 31st July and 9th October respectively. The meeting was peaceful but in other parts of the city the riots broke out. Gandhiji was aggrieved. He issued an appeal to the people to maintain peace. Realising that the riots were not going to end soon, Gandhiji undertook an indefinite fast till the people from the different communities in the city made peace with one another and normal conditions in the city prevailed. When he was assured that the riots had subsided and the peace had been restored in the city, Gandhiji broke the fast on 22 November 1921 in Mani Bhavan along with the representatives from different communities who were invited to partake in the refreshments.

## The Congress Working Committee meeting – 1931

Mani Bhavan remained an important venue for the Congress Working Committee meetings. National leaders like Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam, Sarojini Naidu, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Rajagopalachari and Abdul Gaffar Khan came to here to attend the meetings or to confer with Gandhiji.

On 9th June 1931, the Congress Working Committee met in Mani Bhavan “to discuss the general situation in the country. Gandhi was against proceeding to London to attend the Second Round Table Conference unless the Hindu-Muslim question was resolved in India. (The First Round table Conference convened in London on 12th November 1930 could get no result, as neither the Congress nor Gandhi was a party.) He felt that if the conference became entangled in the communal issue right at the beginning, the real political and economic issues would not get adequate consideration. The Working Committee decided that if other conditions were favourable, Gandhi should represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference. He accepted the verdict but took the public into confidence. “(16). “The talks between Gandhi and the Congress on one hand and with the government on the other continued. Following the talk between Lord Willingdon and Gandhi at Simla, a communiqué, sometimes called the ‘Second Settlement’ was published on 28th August. It provided that the Congress would be solely represented at the Round Table Conference by Gandhi. The document was signed on 27th August. A special train from Simla to Kalka was arranged to enable Gandhi to reach Bombay in time to catch S.S. Rajputana. The Commissioner of Police, Bombay, received a telegram from Simla on 27th August “Gandhi will arrive at Bombay on Saturday morning to catch the mail steamer leaving for England that day he has no passport will you kindly arrange that he has no difficulty in getting one-Home.” A special passport was issued to Gandhi in twenty-four hours. A noteworthy feature of this passport was that a wrong birth-year was entered in it on account of the hurry involved. Gandhi wrote from Mani Bhavan before his departure, “I must go to London with God as my only guide.... The horizon is as black as it possibly could be. There is every chance of my returning empty-handed.” (17)



## Return from London

Gandhi returned from London on December 28, 1931. As Gandhiji disembarked from S S Pilsna, he was greeted by Kasturba, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajgopalachari, Abbas Tyebji, Pattabi Sitarammayya, Subhash Bose, K. M. Munshi, Revd. Elwin, Mrs Perin Captain and other leaders. The Bombay Chronicle gives a vivid description of the reception accorded to Gandhiji at the pier, “ holding a bunch of red roses in his hand and wearing a benevolent smile, Mahama Gandhi passed through seething masses of humans on the Mole to the ‘Mani Bhuvan’, Bombay on Monday morning. The car bearing Mahatmaji passed swiftly through the city streets, reaching ‘Mani Bhuvan’ in less than 15 minutes....At Mani Bhuvan crowds thronged to have ‘Darshan’ of Mahatmaji throughout the day, necessitating Gandhiji to appear on the balcony to acknowledge the people’s greetings.”(18)

On 30th December 1931, the Congress Working Committee met in Mani Bhavan. It was attended by Subhash Chandra Bose, C. Rajgopalachari, Govind Vallabh Pant, Pattabi Sitarammayya, Vallabhbhai J. Patel, M. K. Gandhi, Dr M. A. Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Madhavrao S. Aney, Dr Mohamed Alam, Dr Syed Mahmood, K. F. Nariman, Jamnalal Bajaj, Prabhashankar Pattani and Jairamdas Daulatram Alimchandani. In the meeting, Gandhiji gave a detailed account of his work in London.

The Round Table Conference was not successful. Gandhiji had returned home with empty hands. Though he received a grand ovation upon his return, he was heartbroken.

Just before his arrest on 4th January, Gandhiji wrote to Tagore from Mani Bhavan expressing his anguish, - “Dear Gurudev, I am just stretching my tired limbs on the mattress and as I try to steal a wink of sleep I think of you. I want you to give your best to the sacrificial fire that is being lighted. With love, M.K.Gandhi. January 3, 1932.” (19)

## **Arrest in 1932 from the terrace of Mani Bhavan**

Gandhiji was arrested from the terrace of Mani Bhavan in the early hours of 4th January 1932, “He emerged out Mani Bhavan, walked arm in arm with Devdas to the police car, and quickly took his seat. He was cheered by the large crowd which by then had collected outside Mani Bhavan.” (20)

Verrier Elwin, the renowned anthropologist and tribal activist, was invited by Gandhiji to stay with him. He wrote an eloquent description of Gandhiji’s arrest from the terrace of Mani Bhavan - “Gandhi was staying in a house called Mani Bhuvan and he invited us to stay with him there. There was great excitement in the city; the Viceroy had finally rejected the Congress offer of peace; Nehru was already in jail, and arrest of other national leaders was expected at any moment. But when we reached Mani Bhuvan and climbed to the roof, we found a great serenity in astonishing contrast to the crowds and turmoil outside. The roof was a very pleasant place. Low tents had been erected, and there were palms and plants; at least 300 people could gather there. It was cool and you could see the stars. Bapu was sitting at the wheel quietly spinning. He had already begun his weekly silence. I carried on a one-sided conversation with him, and he wrote down his questions and replied on a scrap of paper which I still have. I must have begun by asking if there was anything I could do...Then Shamrao and I retired to the smaller tent and Bapu lay down about three yards from us, while some thirty others lay on the roof under the canvas shelter. Mrs Gandhi and Mirabehn gave us a surprisingly satisfying supper of dates, nuts and fruit. But I could not sleep... At last I lay down between Shamrao and Bernard on my hastily improvised bed on the floor, just beside Bapu, and fell into a deep sleep, when suddenly like the coming of a dream there was a stir and a whisper: ‘The police have come.’ We started up and I saw what I shall never forget—a fully uniformed Commissioner of Police at the foot of Bapu’s bed, and Bapu just waking, a little bewildered, looking old, fragile and rather pathetic with the mists of sleep still on his face. ‘Mr. Gandhi, it is my duty to arrest you.’ A beautiful smile of welcome broke out on Bapu’s face and now he looked young, strong and confident. He made signs to show that he was keeping silent. The Commissioner smiled and with great courtesy said, ‘I should like you to be ready in half an hour’s time.’ It was five minutes past three. Bapu looked at his watch and the Commissioner said, ‘Ah, the famous watch!’ and

they both laughed heartily. Bapu took a pencil and wrote, 'I will be ready to come with you in half an hour.' The Commissioner laid his hand on Bapu's shoulder with a gesture so full of affection that I thought it was an embrace, until I realized that it was the formal token of arrest. Bapu then cleaned his teeth and retired for a moment. The door was guarded, and all of us who were on the roof sat round in a circle. I looked out onto the road where some had been keeping all-night vigil and where a little crowd, very quiet and orderly, had collected, but there were no special police precautions. When he was ready, Bapu sat in the midst of us for the prayers and we sang together the song of the true Vaishnava. Then Bapu took pencil and paper and wrote a few messages, some last instructions to his followers and a letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai, which was as follows: . . . He then wrote a short note and gave it to me: . . . Then Bapu stood up to take farewell. It was a strange sight: the police at the door, Mirabehn and Devdas bustling to and from with the baggage which was already packed, Bapu surrounded by his friends, many of them weeping. Mrs Gandhi with tears running down her cheeks said, "Can't you take me with you?" Everyone in turn touched his feet, and when I said goodbye he pulled my ear with a smile. He was in very good spirits: he might have been going to a festival rather than a jail. Then, followed by the whole company, he went downstairs. Shamrao and I watched from the roof. The tiny figure got into the car and the crowd surged round it. It was a wonderful tribute to India's non-violence that there were only a few policemen and they were able to be in the midst of the crowd without fear of danger. Just at that moment, a message came to say that Sardar Vallabhbhai, the Congress President had also been arrested. And then the crowd scattered as the car bearing the very soul of India drove away through the dark and deserted streets. "(21)

## **1934 Gandhiji's last stay in Mani Bhavan**

"Congress Parliamentary Board met in Mani Bhavan on 15 and 16 June 1934. Prominent leaders who attended the meeting were M.K. Gandhi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu, K F Nariman, Bhulabhai Desai, Bidhan Roy, K M Munshi, S Satyamurti, Asaf Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, M S Aney, Govind Vallabh Pant and C Gopalachari."(22). Again on 17th and 18th June 1934, the

Congress Working Committee met at Mani Bhavan, and “passed a resolution on the Communal Award without accepting or rejecting it.”(23)

While the Congress Working Committee meeting was in progress in Mani Bhavan, “the crowds of people had gathered in front of Mani Bhavan throughout the day and clamoured for his ‘darshan’. The large throngs outside repeatedly raised cheers of cries of ‘Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai’ and on one or two occasions the demand for darshan was so insistent that Gandhiji appeared on the balcony and addressed few words to the gathering advising them to help the Harijan Cause both by action and by funds. Gandhiji performed his prayers in the open compound of Mani Bhavan instead of the terrace at the end of which he collected money for Harijan fund.” (24)

This was probably Gandhiji’s last stay in Mani Bhavan.

## **Letters written from Mani Bhavan**

Gandhiji was a prolific letter writer. Following are the glimpses of some of the letters which he wrote from Mani Bhavan or mentions about it, gives us insight into Gandhiji’s life. It is interesting to note that Gandhiji signed the letters endearingly to his close associates: for Charles Andrews he was Mohan, to Sarojini Naidu he signed as Spinner, to Sardar Patel he was Mohandas and to Nehru a simple Bapu. The letters reproduced here are taken from The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, corresponding dates and volume numbers are written next to it.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak had written to Gandhiji inquiring about his health. Gandhiji replied to him on 25th August 1918, ” I am thankful for your sympathies. It is natural that you are worried about my health. By the grace of God I am now better. But for some days I shall not be able to leave my bed. The pain was severe. Now it has subsided. I do not intend to attend the Congress session. Also I do not intend to attend the Moderates’ Conference. I know that my view defers from those of both.” – Mohandas. (15:31)

To Devdas, Gandhiji mentions having dinner with Rabindranath Tagore in Mani Bhavan. "CHI. DEVDAS, (15th April 1920) I arrived in the Ashram today, Thursday. I completed the two-day fast in Bombay. I got the letter which you wrote after your return from Patna. Sarladevi and Panditji are in Bombay. They will arrive here on the 19th, leaving Bombay for Godhra on the 16th. I saw a good deal of the poet (Rabindranath Tagore) in Bombay, too. I also had him once for dinner at Revashankerbhai's (Mani Bhavan) The collection in Bombay should be considered good, though of course, it fell below my expectations.

Blessings from BAPU." (17:316)

To the Editor, the Times of India - DEAR SIR STANLEY REED, (April 30, 1919) I enclose herewith form of the swadeshi pledge. I am anxious, if I can, to secure English supporters. I am the more so at the present moment in order to emphasize in a concrete manner the fact that swadeshi is being taken up not in any spirit of antagonism or retaliation, but that it is being taken up as a matter of necessity for the well-being of India. I would be delighted if you could see your way to sign the pledge, and if you approve of it, I would like you to secure further English signatures. M. K. G. (15:261).

DEAR LADY TATA, (August 21, 1919) No apology was necessary regarding the spinning-wheel. I am sorry you remained without one for so long. If you would send your car about noon (Friday), I shall send one machine and some dressed cotton with Govind Baboo who will be able to give you a few tips about spinning and keeping the machine in order, if you could give him a little time. I shall treasure that story about the Governor. It is too good to be hawked about. You need not therefore fear publicity. God willing, your prophecy shall come true. Yours sincerely, M. K. GANDHI (16:54).

BHAI SHRI VALLABHBHAI, (On or after July 15, 1921) Please settle the matter of the grant (to schools) to Anasuyabehn (Anusuyaben Sarabhai). Go and see her and give her a cheque or as much as she wants. Go and see her and give her a cheque or as much as she wants.

Tell Manibehn or Dahyabhai that I had again a long talk with Vithalbhai. I think he understands the importance of the spinning wheel a little better now. I do feel that his proper field is the Councils. He cannot go among the people, mix with them and serve them. It is not as if he did not want to serve. Only he has not trained himself to do so. He has trained himself for the other work. It seems to me that the two kinds of work require different aptitudes. I have come across no one in Bombay who speaks ill of Vithalbhai. Vandemataram from MOHANDAS ( 20:374)

MY DEAR CHARLIE, (July 18 1921) I am neglecting you if not writing to you can be called a neglect of duty. You are ever with me in spirit. I had thought you were in Simla. I have not seen Stokes' open letter. But this week's Y.I.( Young India ) will have a leading article on begar and on the position of women. I have dealt with your message to Bengal in the matter. Do please get well. Give my love to Gurudev and tell me how he is keeping in health. With love, Yours, MOHAN (20:396).

Sarojini Naidu (August 7, 1929) MY DEAR PEACE-MAKER, I have your letter giving me all the information about dogs and daughters. I suppose you put the dogs first because they are less troublesome. I shall be in Bombay on 11th by the Gujarat Mail, not the Kathiawar Mail which comes an hour later. I dare not stay at the Taj. I must go to Laburnum Road ( Mani Bhavan ). Nothing will be required at Mr Jinnah's house as I shall have taken horse's food at Laburnum Road. You will please send me back the same day. Lovingly yours, MATTER-OF-FACT (NOT MYSTIC) SPINNER (92:52).

Telegram to Revashankarbhai from SS Pilsna, informing him about the number of people accompanying Gandhiji to Bombay. The Telegraphic address of Revashankar Jhaveri at Mani Bhavan was MORALITY.

(On or after December 23, 1931) MORALITY BOMBAY NINE INCLUDING SWISS COUPLE. (48:437).

MY DEAR JAWAHAR, (January 2, 1932) I was delighted to receive your letter. You have no cause to envy us poor folk outside. But we do envy you for getting all the glory and leaving the drudgery to the outsiders. But we are plotting vengeance. I hope you are allowed to get some newspapers. In all I am doing you are constantly

before my mind's eye. I saw Kamala the other day. She does need plenty of rest. I shall try to see her once more and insist upon her not leaving her room till she is thoroughly restored. I hope you will approve of the action taken regarding Dr Mahmud. I am sure that the promise to pay the assessment on Anand Bhawan should be paid [sic]. Love to you both. BAPU (48:477).

## **Mani Bhavan – a place of pilgrimage**

Mani Bhavan was the nerve centre of Gandhiji's activities and movements from 1917 to 1934. Whenever Gandhiji was in Mani Bhavan a large number of men and women would gather outside the entrance to get the glimpse of Gandhiji and sing patriotic songs. This house played host to prominent national leaders, Congress workers, businessmen, foreign delegates, journalists and well-wishers who would call on Gandhiji for meetings, discussions or consultations.

Today it stands as a memorial to Gandhiji's life and teachings. This house continues to inspire people from all walks of life. The distinguished leaders and dignitaries from India and around the world come here to pay rich tributes to their hero – Mahatma Gandhi.

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Space, Place and Peace:  
Engaging with Mahatma  
Gandhi in the Discursive  
Alternative

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**Abstract:** With the ever-increasing challenges to the very existence of human societies, there has been a dire need to have an alternate discourse about the way human societies are 'progressing' and would progress in future with reference to nature, resources, communities, developmental dynamics and so on. The same reiterates and invites innovative reconstructs in the realms of social relations, administrative setups and political structures that have otherwise become defunct to address the recent issues. The existing construct has been developed over the centuries under the specific influences of world political and economic order and the then geographies of power engulfing most of the societies to rework their lives through the specificities of capitalism as a dominant discourse. The 'competitive' spirit instilled therein forced the societies (irrespective of their geography) to linger in and around 'war' zones almost every day.

There have been several alternate discourses introduced so far, to mention a few: 'welfare state', 'democracy', 'human face of globalisation' (another world is possible) and the most recent popular on 'sustainability'. However, all these approaches have yielded limited benefits and were subsumed apparently in the 'logic' of market economy. If at all, there has to be a concrete alternative to resolve the current issues, there is a need to combine the understanding of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar and of course, Karl Marx.

Harmony, peace, social equality and economic equality should be at the centre of the alternative discourse. There has hardly been any discourse that centres 'peace' as one of its core values. The article is an attempt to explore the possibility of 'peace' centric geopolitical and developmental discourse and investigate the relevance of Gandhian perspective on development and peace.

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## **I. Introduction: Referencing the Context**

The contemporary time(s) are marked with increasing complexities in socio-cultural and politico-economic structures. There has been aggravation of several issues threatening the very existence of human societies. The developmental discourses that have been introduced so far work on the principles of *capitalism*. Here when I say *capitalism*, I mean to refer to the 'invisible hand' present in all the political regimes. At least, the contemporary time(s) do not exhibit any substantial difference in attending the current socio-cultural and politico-economic problems. Why I choose to talk simultaneously about 'development' and 'geopolitics' is because the contemporary discourses on development and geopolitics are intrinsically connected with each other and revolve around the workings of capital. So it is the developmental geopolitics that needs to be scrutinized in the light of the current situation of economic crisis and associated consequences. There had been critical discourses in analysing the 'development geopolitics' in the late 1950s and that remained prominent till almost the last decade of 20th century. Raul Prebisch in late 1950s; Andre Gunder Frank (1971); Paul Baran (1957); Paul Sweezy (1966) all contributed to the concept of 'underdevelopment' and theories of dependency while exploring the link between political agendas and developmental discourses. The classical and neoclassical economic theories on development remained mainstream, leading to marginalisation of every other analysis of developmental geopolitics.

The 1980s witnessed a forceful shift in the perspectives on development. Several national governments especially from the Global South were forced to realise that international capital flows were must for economic development. Interestingly, it wasn't the World Bank or International Monetary Fund that was involved in pushing these agendas but it was the United Nations that abruptly hijacked 'development' as their prime objective. The abrupt shift was justified by interlinking 'Peace and Security' - there as the prime objective with achievement of better levels of economic and social development. Following the same, MDGs - Millennium Development Goals were designed, keeping socio-economic development at its core. Ironically, a supranational body that was meant for maintaining peace and security, got converted into a puppet regime and started serving the interest of international capital. The resolution passed in 1997 by the UN reiterated the need to take measures that have larger implications on economic development through the international capital as a primary driver (United Nations, The Draft on Resolution, 1997). In the year 2015, the UN declared that the goal of poverty eradication has been met by most of the countries as it claims that more than 1 billion people have been lifted from extreme poverty worldwide (UN, accessed in 2020). Following the same, in the next step, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced where there is no mention of poverty eradication and associated key issues. At this backdrop, now the UN is pushing the agendas of sustainable development, thus, falsifying the very objectives of economic and social development. It could be interesting to note such a shift in the policy of the UN is responsible for intensifying the contradictions in the national policies on development and environment as they are set in the times of neoliberal governance regime and shaped under finance capitalism.

With the economic aftershocks of neoliberal reforms and intensification of global economic integration, anti-globalisation trends are already creating space for themselves in developed economies, for example, BREXIT. With extremist regimes in the US, Great Britain, China and other European countries, there have been efforts to reframe the regulations on visas and citizenship status. All kinds of restrictions on trade and commerce interactions are in the pipeline. The importance of 'local' is gaining much more attention than ever. The recent COVID 19 pandemic, the world could observe a complete set back to the economy. There has been the 're-realisation of Geography and self-reliance'. To revive this economic situation,

we need resources – all kinds of resources, a strong local network of inter-spatial linkages and political vision.

What especially, does India have in its account currently? The resources are already depleted and we are at the verge of complete exhaustion of some of the very important energy resources. Our environmental protection policies and 'development' policies contradict each other and stand compromised on the quality of the environment. There is a complete stagnancy at the level of the economy with all-time low GDP i.e. -23.9 in quarter 1 (The Economic Times, 2020). An estimated 122 million people lost their jobs in the Coronavirus pandemic (The Hindu, 2020). At social and societal level we continue to experience complete anarchy with the rise of post modern and neoliberal regimes setting in the narrow agendas of identity politics over real concerns of socio-economic and ecological development. Nonetheless, the policies on economic development also emanate from capitalist market ideology and continue to exclude everything else that does not fit into the capitalist logic. [May it be the poorest of the poor or the children, women, farmers, workers and search countless numbers of people who are not consumers, taxpayers.] In COVID 19 pandemic, the situation is far grimmer and has witnessed complete wiping out of the 'progress' so far. Ironically, to deal with this situation, almost all governments are falling back on options of localisation. Recently, there has been a policy envisioned by the Central Government titled as 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' launched on 12th May, 2020 having its five pillars as economy, infrastructure, system, vibrant demography and demand (Ministry of Finance, 12th July, 2020). It is an effort of self-reliance and localisation as per what has been described by the ministry.

So we are back to square one – 1947 and Gandhi's vision of self-reliant villages. Who becomes most relevant at the outset? It is Gandhian economic principles that would be the most appropriate for making India self-reliant in terms of economy.

## II. Development and Geopolitics

What is development is the key question today. Capital centric economic and societal development is equivalent to materialistic growth and product consumption. How much one consumes decides his worth in the market economy. Noam Chomsky (1988) in his book {Manufacturing Consent} suggests that the market has the deepest influence on our everyday life. The circuits of consumption, production and distribution imply more or less the economics of profit maximization than satisfying the basic needs and demands of people specially the masses. It is obvious to see that the economy is subservient to the capitalist interest and occupies peripheral position in serving the interest of masses. Capital continues to be the soul of economic organisation whether it is founded on capitalist, communist or socialist ideologies. None of the political ideologies have ever created an alternative to 'capital'. These three economic and political systems may differ in their approaches vis-a-vis distribution of the profit in the different cross sections of society. But ultimately, reaching the poorest of the poorer has remained equally difficult for all the systems. The geopolitics - a structure that is set to work again in the interest of international capital - basically capitalises on development that has 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 1950) at its core. The global geopolitical structures and international relations have been reconstituted frequently, following the vested interests of the developed economies in resources, territories and people. China as a major power now, too, emerges to be equally expansionist, authoritarian and exploitative. The world system theory proposed by Wallerstein (1974) fits perfectly here. It suggests that the world is a single entity having several hierarchical levels denoting specific power parity and with 'exploitation' as its integral component. All the countries are positioned in core, semi peripheral and peripheral positions depending on their politico-economic status. They may change their positions as per the altering developmental and geopolitical scenario. Both upward and downward mobility is possible. It is interesting to see how in the past three decades, the frequency of altering the political equations between several countries has been accelerating under the regime of international finance capital. The formation of BRICS for example is the best example of such altering geopolitical equations. The recent changes in the geopolitical relations of India with its neighbouring countries and their closeness to China is another example of such temporary geopolitical

structures that are largely guided by vested interests. Though it is claimed that there has been no war since World War Two, the period since then has been witnessing several 'peace efforts' in the form of 'war on terrorism'; 'saving people from the authoritarian regime'; 'peace army' and so on. These 'peace efforts', ironically were in the form of military interventions, stirring political instability against unwanted governments, supporting the anti-government groups and organisations and so on. The dominant nations from every continent have probably applied all these methods to regain regional control and domination. India too, has not shy away from. The killing race for territorial dominations in the name of financial aid and help, economic growth and so on has already killed and uprooted billions of people from their everyday lives. 'No direct war between superpowers' cannot be equated as peace (Gregory, 2010).

In this backdrop, what is the status of India is another key question. India spent almost 71.1 billion dollars in 2019 making it world's third biggest military spender (Shukla, A, 2020). India spends only 3 percent of its budget on education. Is it affordable for a developing country like India to spend so much on defense? In fact, the peacekeeping efforts in an innovatively creative manner would balance out all odds. It would be policies that keep peace as its essential core. Would India emerge as a leader that can create space for peaceful international deliberations? Here again, the conceptualisation of peace by Gandhi becomes most significant as he believed international relations can also be governed by the principles of nonviolence. He further proposes that 'there is no path to peace, peace is the path'. I would extend it by saying 'peace is space',

### **III. Geography, Gandhi and Space**

In critical geographical praxis, 'space' is one of the most widely used constructs to understand the interrelationship between people, nature, resources, economies, cultures and social structures as spaces are the productive reflections of their amalgamations. That further suggests that the spaces are the mirrors of socio-cultural, economic and political amalgamations at a particular time and get represented explicitly in a particular place. The major determinants of any



socio-cultural space thus would be people, communities and structures. What a particular space would contain will be decided by the process of production of space. Lefebvre (1996) explains the production of space as through 'being' and 'becoming'. He also suggests a triad to decode the production of space – perceived, conceived and lived spaces. 'Spatial' approach reinstates 'space as a dynamic element'. Most of the conventional geographers look at 'time' as a decider. The debate goes on around vis-à-vis how to place space and time with each other. For many, 'time' is active, dynamic, decisive – so masculine, whereas spaces are passive, static, dependent – so feminine. The narrative of 'everything changes with the time' dominates the understanding of any 'change', may it be, social change or political change. Interestingly, in the process, one conveniently ignores the conditions of 'spatial fixity' where in the absence of any stimulus, irrespective of 'passing time', the spaces remain unchanged. For example, a remote village continues to have similar living for decades together, in the absence of any stimuli. That indicates that the spaces are not passive and do not wait for 'time' to transform them. These are volatile forces, processes and influential people that shape any space and punctuate imprints of those changes in 'time'. How the space has evolved over the period of time will decide what fundamental ethics have been put to work, produce and 'run' that space. So what does constitute the socio-political space and which political ideologies are shaping the political spatial mending and so on, becomes vital. For instance, the entire history of world politics is dominated by the discourses of expansionism, dominations and controls. In geographical perspective, 'peace' has always been equated with a 'no war' situation, putting peace as a secondary element of political space. The very secondary position of peace in geopolitical studies engulfs the discourse on peace and shifts it to the conflict resolution mode and weakens the independent thinking on centralising peace in the alternate discourse. In fact, peace research as a discipline has been polarised as much as peace as a concept (Swiss peace, 2014).

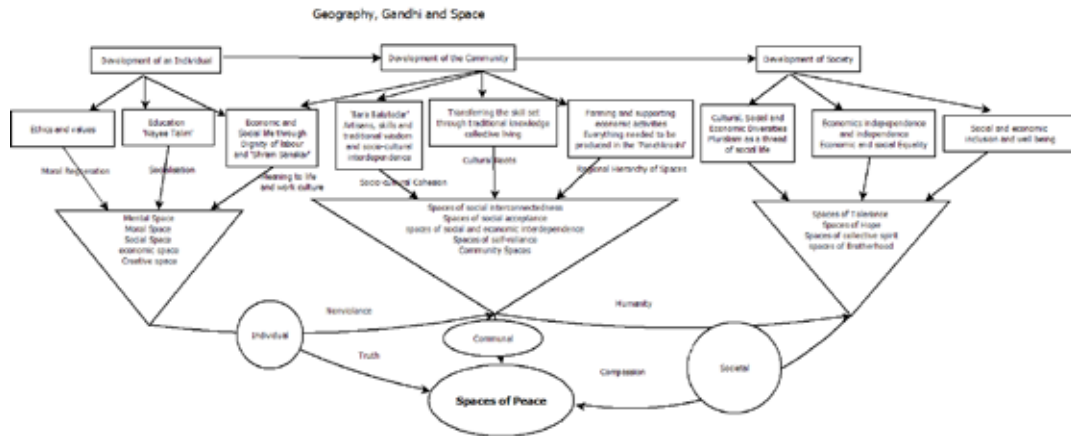


Figure 1: Conceptualising Production of Space through Gandhian Principles

It could be interesting to see how Gandhi dealt with space in his several proposals when it comes to development and geopolitics. The analysis of his models on development as well as international relations suggest that he firmly believed in the continuous production and reproduction of space at various levels of individual and collective life.

It is the coherence and interconnectedness of all principles he proposed in his lifetime that allows us to have Gandhian principles at the core of alternate discourse on development and geopolitics. For example, he has given tremendous emphasis on mental space that includes ethical and moral training not just to an individual but also its application in different situations and varying scales. As suggested by Rathi (accessed in 2020), Gandhi continues to emphasise a creation of mental space that would encourage the moral regeneration of an individual and imbibe non-violent values. The creation of 'ethical moral space' thus not only remains the core of individual moral regeneration but also implied to the larger socio-political spaces at the level of community and society. His emphasis on dignity of labour and '*Shram Sanskaras*' to be imbibed in formal education suggests his keen interest in rebuilding a society that respects all kinds of work and there is no 'caste' identity attached to it. His emphasis on education through '*Shram Sanskar*' and insistence on developing skill sets pertaining to '*Bara Balutedar*' (12 types of artisans interdependent on each other in rural settings) in students got reflected through the experiment of '*Nayi Talim*' in school education. The moral education through '*The Experiments of Truth*' and philosophy of

Nonviolence and 'simple living, higher thinking', were the key elements in reaching the level of self-actualisation and spiritual intimacy. Finally, his directives on the natural environment. Gandhi upheld that the environment is not an inheritance to which one is entitled, but is rather a loan from one's ancestors for the future generations. The same would imbibe the values of social equality in children. There can be simultaneous economic space generated through the internal interdependence of various artisans, farmers and other elements of villages to create a self-sustaining and self-reliant local economic space. He expected the same would promote social and economic interdependence that would keep the village society together and encourage collective life. The creative space would allow people to engage in the development of appropriate technologies and sharpening the traditional skill sets to solve the problems that are locally created. Such social and economic cohesion of different communities will lead to the development of healthy society. The core principles of these societies would be socio-cultural pluralism, respect for diversities, tolerance, acceptance and nonviolence to achieve a creative, truthful and peaceful individual and societal life at the end. His firm belief in 'simple living and high thinking' also guides the society to have reorientation on how to 'consume'.

Reconstruction of 'peace' and 'space' must be simultaneous, in fact, both should be intrinsically linked, as Gandhi suggests. With the advent of globalisation, there is, on a massive scale, an abrupt, hurried and leap frog pattern of social transformation. Probably at every scale there is a rush to grab 'maximum'. We continue to equate joy, happiness and peace with materialistic consumption – more or less which is a passive mode of consumption. There is a complete lack of creativity and originality in what we do as we have been trained to believe that 'consumption is creativity'. Peace needs to be constructed in spaces by integrating and interweaving the mental peace at individual level to socio-economic peace at community level and political peace at societal level – as per one of his sayings, 'there is a sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed'.

The model of holistic development had been already offered by Mahatma Gandhi. His ardent followers like Vinoba Bhave who successfully moderated Bhoodan Movement, experiments rooted in Gandhian Vision are success stories

like Popatrao Pawar and the experiment of *Hivarebajar*, *Mendha Lekha*, *rights to forests and empowerment of Scheduled tribe*, *Vanrai* by Mohan Dharia, etc. Why Gandhian principles become extremely important here in societal regeneration is because of his emphasis on individual's moral and ethical development.

Interestingly, the principles with which he suggests a reconstruction of society at local levels, the same principles he has suggested to attain World Peace. The geopolitical world structure is so complex that one may be confused by how such simple principles can solve the complex conflicts and war like situations. Rathi (accessed in 2020) suggests that Gandhi envisioned a World Federation or International League founded on the principles of non-violence and international cooperation. He also expected the proposed world federation to maintain a nonviolence policy where the soldiers of this force would bear no arms (Rathi, accessed in 2020).

Secondly, Gandhi believed in the attainment of peace through establishing economic equality as the "master-key" to non-violent world order (Rathi, accessed in 2020). Peace must have its roots in fraternity rather than in fear. He regarded that global peace could not be possible unless the exploitative world economic and social hierarchy is replaced by a new world that is committed to non-violence and exploitation free social order (Rathi, accessed in 2020).

Nazareth (accessed in 2020), in his speech delivered at National Defence College, Delhi (2008) expresses the views of Antony Copley who stated that Gandhian style resistance to apartheid was part of the wider struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism. He also sheds light on the influence of Gandhi on Nehru, who was behind the Non-Aligned Movement. On international relations, when Gandhi was asked about its relation with Great Britain, he had answered that India would be completely cut off from the Empire but not from the British nation. I would prefer an equal relationship with Britain (Fischer, L,1954).

There have been many struggles and freedom movements that got inspiration from Gandhian principles of nonviolence. To name a few, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and many others have engaged themselves in promoting peace as the core of geopolitical relations. Many environmental

movements also have their roots in Gandhian Philosophy. Right from Chipko movement to recent Aarey movement, the young generation too followed satyagraha as its way of exhibiting opposition to the decision of state governments to cut down the trees. Internationally the German Green party has acknowledged Mahatma Gandhi for inspiring them to rethink on life styles and methods of production which rely on an endless supply and a lavish use of raw materials (Nazareth, 2008). Megaron (2011) offers an interesting concept of 'Everyday Peace' which can be connected here, as its basic premise is communal and societal harmony. Gandhian principles have always been relevant in reconstructing the socio-cultural fabric of society in the most pluralistic way they are now.

#### **IV. Places with Spaces of Peace**

The experiments of reconstructing spaces of peace through Gandhian philosophy thus emanated from the effort of reconstructing communities... rather reconstructing people into communities. There is a tremendous scope for geographers to emerge with innovative concepts inspired by Gandhian Economics and philosophy in reconstructing 'peaceful spaces'. In fact, internal and external peace are intrinsically linked with each other. Bhutan, a tiny country ranks 15 in Global Peace Index in 2019 whereas India ranks 141 in Global Peace Index with deterioration of 4 points in last 5 years. The choice is ours...

What can really bring us peace – homogeneity or diversity? It is definitely the diversity – environmental, social, cultural and so on. In fact, the whole world economy thrives on diversity. Geographical diversities can be translated into spatial uniqueness. The planning should be such that most of the people get right to not only resources (physical, financial and infrastructural) but also a right to plan their resources and livelihood in a sustainable manner for the long term and larger communal welfare (Phadke, 2019). The larger sustainability can be brought through inclusion, equity and responsibility (Phadke, 2019) and peace rests there ...

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Revisiting Gandhi in Our  
Contemporaneous World  
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## I. Introductory

While exploring the relevance of Gandhi in our contemporaneous world within the ambit of the given theme, “Mahatma Gandhi Then and Now,” the question that needs to be raised at the very outset is, ‘what is Gandhi?’ and not just ‘who is Gandhi?’ ‘Gandhi is dead; long live Gandhi,’ as we may say in a jurisprudential discourse for providing continuity of one generation to another. Likewise, in our contextual response, Gandhi stands for a unique idea, an innovative thought, or simply a benevolent philosophy of life emanating from the model of his own conduct, his life and his thoughts and actions. This is what survives even after the exit of Gandhi from the temporal world and this is with which we have to do with.

For deciphering the values of Gandhi’s life, which have profoundly impacted the world in ways more than one in shaping its social, economic and political thinking, I tend to turn to the limited arena of his experiment during the freedom struggle with a diehard revolutionary. This was the young man, by the name of Prithvi Singh, with a chequered history of revolutionary exploits, carrying a heavy price on his head, and who voluntarily surrendered himself to Gandhi in 1938.

The historic account of the life of Prithvi Singh is well documented in the biography penned down by Rahul Sankriyayan, known as the Father of Indian Travelogue

literature, in Hindi under the title, *Sardar Prithvi Singh*(1944):<sup>1</sup> This account stands updated by Prithvi Singh in his own autobiography in Hindi, *Krantipath ka pathic* (1964) <sup>2</sup> with a Foreword by Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, an eminent Hindi novelist, literary historian, essayist, critic and scholar par excellence.<sup>3</sup> The second Hindi edition was further updated and translated into English, and published by the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, with the title, *Baba Prithvi Singh Azad – The Legendary Crusader* (1987).<sup>4</sup>

Baba Prithvi Singh Azad (1892-1989), was one of the founder members of Gadar Party in the United States of America in 1913, who suffered incarceration during the pre-independence period, including a long term in the Cellular Jail in Andaman. He was accorded the privileged position of eminence by having him as the President of 'All India Freedom Fighters' Organization' with concurrence of all who steered the freedom movement. The grateful Nation honoured him with the award of Padma Bhushan in 1977 "for his distinct contribution to society." In 1978, he earned the Soviet Land Nehru Award for his reminiscences (in Hindi) – *Lenin ke desh mein* (in the Land of Lenin).

This article is an attempt to bring to light some of the basic values of life emanating from the intimate interaction between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh. And how Gandhi's philosophy of truth and non-violence tempered and moulded the life of Prithvi Singh, who was steadfast in his belief anchored in violent revolution. In this dedicated discourse, what is of crucial significance is, not merely the end-result of attainment of freedom from the foreign rule but, also the *means* to attaining that end. It is in this process of pursuing that ultimate goal of freedom, some

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1 Peoples Publishing House, Pt. Ltd., New Delhi. The first edition of 1944 was followed in quick succession by the second edition in 1946, and thereafter the third edition in 1979. Rahul Sankrityayan (9 April 1893 – 14 April 1963) is the one who played a pivotal role to give travelogue a 'literature form'.

2 The first edition was published by Pragya Prakashan, Chandigarh. The second edition published by Shivalal Aggarwal & Co.; Agra appeared in 1970.

3 Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (19 August 1907 – 19 May 1979) in his Foreword has, inter alia, commended: "What is special about Baba Prithvi Singh's autobiography is the evidence of great faith and self-confidence, integrity and introspection. It is remarkably free from bitterness. He does not try to prove his point of view by condemning others. There is no place in his life for obstinacy. When he surrendered himself to Gandhiji, he showed an open mind, supreme courage and commendable detachment. He has the courage to shed his pet convictions...." See, below, *The Legendary Crusader*, at p. xx.

4 Hereinafter simply cited as *The Legendary Crusader*. (1987)

ideas, thoughts or principles get crystalized, what may be typically termed as the Gandhian principles of life. In this contextual matrix, we may finally examine how, in what respect, and to what extent those crystalized Gandhian principles continue to be of any relevance in our contemporary world, which is beset with multiple challenges in education, self-reliance, social relations, environment, etc., impinging upon the lives of people both as individuals and individuals as an integral part of society.

## **II. Saga of revolutionary exploits of Prithvi Singh (Prior to his voluntary surrender to Gandhi in 1938)<sup>5</sup>**

Prithvi Singh, at heart ever a revolutionary, left his home and hearth at the prime age of 17 with the objective of liberating the motherland from the oppressive rule of the British. He oddly travelled to Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila, and America incognito to seek support for his mission by avoiding police detection. During his sojourn in America, he joined the group of like-minded young people in 1913, who had founded a party - Gadar Party - vowing to uproot the foreign power from the Indian soil. For accomplishing their liberation mission, a group of those young revolutionaries, called Gadarites, returned to India by ship. However, while doing so, they all were caught at Calcutta port, excepting only one member, who managed to evade his detection at that time. But sooner than later, he was also caught, and sent to serve a long-term imprisonment. He was Prithvi Singh.

Owing to his exemplary courageous revolutionary spirit, Prithvi Singh was implicated in the First Lahore Conspiracy Case (1915), and sentenced to death. However, as if by quirk turn of history, the death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and he was lodged in the Cellular Jail in Andaman, which was the place for keeping aloof and apart the persons who were either most dreaded criminals, or who were considered as the deadliest enemy of the colonial rule in India.

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5 This account has been abstracted from *The Legendary Crusader* (1987).

During his lodging at the Cellular Jail for about seven years, Prithvi Singh was not deterred to create a sort of revolution amongst the otherwise subdued prisoners by undertaking fast unto death for the inhuman treatment meted out to the fellow 'human' prisoners.<sup>6</sup> Somehow or the other, that news about the totally unacceptable beastly treatment of prisoners and the unprecedented fast unto death for five long months leaked into the mainstream population of India. This instantly created unrest and upheaval amongst the Indians across country, and, which, in turn, forced the British to immediately shift him from the Cellular Jail in Andaman to the prison house somewhere else in India.

In this process of transferring and re-lodging, while being escorted to Calcutta, Prithvi Singh jumped out of the running train in order to escape from the life-term imprisonment. However, he was caught again sooner than later and thereby ending his devilishly earned short-lived, transient, 'freedom'. It seems, in due course of time, this mode of escape proved to be a mere rehearsal for his second similar attempt of jumping out of the running train in 1922, and thereafter Prithvi Singh remained underground and untraced for the next 16 years. During this long period, he pursued his revolutionary mission in close proximity of leading lights such as Dr. Narayan Damodar Savarkar, the younger brother of Veer Vinayak Savarkar, Shri Ganesh Raghunath Vaishampayann, Dr. P.V. Kane. With the generous grant from Maharaja Krishan Kumar Singh of Bhavanagar, a petty State in Saurashtra, and the invaluable advice and help of Col. Zoraver Singh, Advisor to the then Resident on behalf of the British Government, Prithvi Singh managed to start a *Vyayamshala* (gymnasium), known as Ganesh Krida Mandal, and established himself as a 'physical instructor' under the assumed name of Swamirao. This gave him an opportunity to meet thousands of young minds and fill them with patriotic fervour.<sup>7</sup> However, during all these years of underground life in disguise, Prithvi Singh was carrying a heavy reward on his head, dead or alive, to any person who could help the British police in tracing him!

With the launching of Satyagraha Movement by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930s, there came about a perceptible change in the political awakening of masses in India.

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6 Some of them died. However, Prithvi Singh survived with forced feeding over five months.

7 See, *The Legendary Crusader*, at pp. 122-15.

This changed scenario made Prithvi Singh realize and re-think at least on two clear counts. One, to overthrow the British power in India through armed rebellion was neither feasible nor desirable. Two, and this was indeed a knotty question, what sort of critical contribution he could make on the liberation front by remaining underground under the continual shadow of death?

At this critical juncture, Prithvi Singh by virtue of his exploits in disguise against the British rule, which were amply reflected in the look-out notices affixed at all railway stations and other prominent public places, he was tracked down as a fellow revolutionary by Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad and Sukhdev. This became feasible through the agency of trusted friends in the State of Gujrat. The trio instantly persuaded him to go to Soviet Russia as a member of Republican Army with the objective of learning the strategy that ensured the success of the Red Army in bringing about a socialist revolution in Russia. How, in what manner, and at what opportune time to reach Russia, 'the land of revolutionaries' political dream', was left to the ingenuity of Prithvi Singh himself! However, as a token of affirmation of their faith in the fellow revolutionary, they gave him fifty cartridges along with an automatic pistol that could fire 11 bullets.<sup>8</sup>

Prithvi Singh managed to reach Soviet Russia, studied the strategies of bringing about revolution, which were essentially premised on the fundamental principles of communism. He stayed in Russia for about three years. Soon thereafter he returned to India and roamed stealthily for about five years there and everywhere in search of an opportunity to accomplish his mission of liberation. However, one thing became increasingly clear to him that it was no more possible to remain undetected by the British police and their CID. This thought of being caught at any moment became confirmed by the flashed news about the arrest of one of his own very close fellow revolutionaries, Comrade Gurmukh Singh, due to the betrayal by an acquaintance of his.<sup>9</sup> This was a sharp reminder to him of the imminent danger of his being similarly caught at the instance of a bare acquaintance, who may not be able to resist the temptation of claiming large reward by just informing the police about his whereabouts! And that would, besides his own instant

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8        Id., at p. 144.

9        Id., at p. 203.

elimination, also play havoc with the life and interest of all the patriotic persons, who had hitherto helped him directly or indirectly in remaining underground for long 16 years!<sup>10</sup> This in itself was the most baffling thought that was pricking the conscience of Prithvi Singh continuously.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, he also clearly perceived and understood that, by the year 1938, the political climate in India had dramatically changed. No more was there any such revolutionary activity going on as would require collection of arms or running an underground press for creating the environment of armed rebellion against the British rule. Weary of living an underground life under the continual shadow of death, Prithvi Singh shared his predicament with his “communist comrades” and sought their counsel.<sup>12</sup> “They had nothing to guide me except to approach Gandhi ji,” recalls Prithvi Singh in his autobiography.<sup>13</sup>

### **III. Prithvi Singh ‘approaching’ Gandhi through his soul-stirring surrender and its profound impact on the former**

Prithvi Singh with the chequered history of revolutionary exploits against the British Rule in India, and who was also carrying a reward over his head, met Gandhi in person for the first time in 1938. The meeting was arranged through persons close to Gandhi at about 10 p.m. on May 17, 1938 as soon as Gandhi returned to Ashram after attending the Working Committee meeting of the Congress party.<sup>14</sup> The moment Prithvi Singh introduced himself as a person who remained underground for 16 years and what kind of life he had hitherto lived under the assumed name of Swami Rao, Gandhi became instantly interested in him as he had already heard

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10 Id., at pp. 203-204.

11 Id., at 204.

12 Ibid,

13 Ibid.

14 The meeting was arranged through the intervention of two prominent personalities, Pattabhai Sitaramayya and Nanabhai Bhatt. See, *ibid.*

the name of Swamirao and his constructive work amongst the youth of Gujarat.<sup>15</sup> Spontaneously, Gandhi asked him to write down a brief account of his life and bring that narrative to him the next day.

Prithvi Singh took the temporary shelter at the residence of one of his most trusted beneficiaries, and spent the whole night in writing what Gandhi wanted him to reveal about himself. After doing what he was desired to do by Gandhi, Prithvi Singh felt somewhat shaky for a moment in his resolve of surrendering. Since that short candid account of himself in his own handwriting constituted clear confessed evidence against himself, it merited his instant hanging by the British government. In this alarming situation, he at once wanted to consult his "communist friends at an appointed time," but "they did not turn up."<sup>16</sup> And this "hurt" him much.<sup>17</sup> His predicament at that moment, in his own words, was: "Surrendering myself to the police whom I had eluded for so many years with so many hair-breadth escapes was a question of life and death to me."<sup>18</sup>

Be that as it may, the next day, before the daybreak, Prithvi Singh moved to the residence of one of his confidence<sup>19</sup> and stayed with him till the sunset. At night fall, he called on Gandhi at the appointed time and place and submitted his self-account narrative. Gandhi read his narration with "all seriousness," and spontaneously "remarked" that Prithvi Singh was "a dangerous man to the British Government," and that his release was "next to impossible."<sup>20</sup> However, there was

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15 Swamirao of Ganesh Krida mandal was the house-hold name in the State of Gujrat.

16 The Legendary Crusader, at p. 204.

17 Ibid. The feeling of 'hurt' in the situational context, it needs to be born in mind, should not be construed in the sense of 'betrayal', for it has already been stated, that the eventual decision of surrender was taken by Prithvi Singh in consultation with his close communist friends, see, *supra* notes 12 and 13, and the accompanying text. Thus, the so-called 'hurt' was just a panic reaction when there was every danger of being caught by police even before he could surrender himself to Gandhi, the prospect that he hitherto successfully avoided for 16 long years. May be, those communist friends had nothing more to add to what was already known and decided, and that there was no easy mode of communicating to Prithvi Singh to that effect either. Moreover, the chances of his being caught turned out to be true by the news of Prithvi Singh's anticipated surrender to Gandhi before his actual surrender. See, *infra*, note 24.

18 Ibid.

19 Shantilal Shah, see, *ibid*.

20 Ibid.

still one “more serious problem” appended to his voluntary surrender: whether the British Government would let him “live”? And this prompted Gandhi to add:<sup>21</sup>

“You had better give up the idea of self-surrender and spend the rest of your life as you did for about 16 years. This country is bound to be free sooner or later. And then you would be a free man.”

To this candid counsel of Gandhi, filled with genuine concern for the safety of his life, Prithvi Singh readily responded with equal vehemence by saying:<sup>22</sup>

“Self-surrender does not mean only my personal [physical] freedom. It is high time to come into the open and play the political game and set an example to the youth of the country.”

In the light of this intense interaction, although very short and cryptic, yet revealing the profound purport of voluntary surrender, Gandhi “postponed the issue for the time being,” and desired that “in the meantime we both have time to think over and decide.”<sup>23</sup>

However, the “time to think over and decide” was not to be, as the news of Prithvi Singh’s intended surrender leaked out.<sup>24</sup> This led Gandhi, who intended to correspond with the Viceroy on the issue of voluntary surrender by Prithvi Singh, to change his mind the moment he was told that his idea had leaked! Without losing any time, Gandhi penned down a letter on the issue of voluntary surrender by Prithvi Singh and sent the same through his private secretary to the Commissioner of Police, Bombay. In his communication, he stated frankly, without any prevarication, that Prithvi Singh, who was a rebel against the Government and had broken jail more than once, had taken refuge in his Ashram, and that the Commissioner of Police was welcome to come and arrest him while in his

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21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 This news was confirmed by one of the very close friends of Prithvi Singh, namely Bahuddin Usman, who immediately rushed to meet Mahadev Desai, the private secretary of Gandhi, to check the veracity of the news, and found that it was absolutely true. See, id., at p. 205.



custody. To this cryptic communication, Gandhi added an earnest suggestive plea that if the Police Commissioner would let Prithvi Singh stay on in his Ashram, “it would be good of him.”<sup>25</sup>

Realizing the fugitive character of Prithvi Singh and the anticipated portentous fallouts of his voluntary surrender, the Police Commissioner did not desire to act on his own. Promptly he wrote to the Central Government for seeking their urgent directions in the matter. Lo and beholden, the Viceroy ordered him “to arrest Prithvi Singh, who was a dangerous criminal and to do so with due care.”<sup>26</sup> Pursuant to this directive, the Police Commissioner rang up Gandhi to say that “according to instructions received from above, he would reach the Ashram the following day at two o’clock to arrest Prithvi Singh,” and that “he would be grateful if Prithvi Singh was made available then.”<sup>27</sup>

When this news of his impending arrest by the police was conveyed to Prithvi Singh, he felt happy without entertaining any feeling of remorse whatsoever. At this cheerful voluntary surrender by Prithvi Singh, Gandhi “felt gratified.”<sup>28</sup>

The Police Commissioner along with a CID Officer arrived at the Ashram on the stipulated time. On his arrival, he immediately dismissed the Bombay police force, which had reached earlier and surrounded the Ashram for meeting any eventuality or untoward situation. While disbanding the police force, the Commissioner said that he himself would take charge of Prithvi Singh and escort him to jail. The inmates of the Ashram assembled and began to recite prayers as a token of their farewell to Prithvi Singh. Some snapshots were also taken. With their blessing, Prithvi Singh left the Ashram happily and walked out with the Police Commissioner to Jail, his new abode!

The next day, the news of Prithvi Singh’s surrender to the police was published in the local newspapers along with the political statement of Gandhi. However, an

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

authentic historic account of how, in what manner and under what circumstances, Prithvi Singh approached Gandhi, and then how he had voluntarily surrendered to the Police, was affirmed by Gandhi ji editorially in his weekly, *The Harijan* (May 28, 1938) under the title, "The Fellow Pilgrim." After a detailing account of how Prithvi Singh was convicted for life sentence in the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1915, how he spent years in Andaman Cellular Jail and other jails in Madras and Rajmahendri, and how he succeeded in escaping from police custody by jumping out of the running train in 1922, and how thereafter he remained underground for 16 long years till the date of his surrender to him on May 18, 1938, Gandhi described him as a "great revolutionary", who "master minded his own movement." How Gandhi came round to take him in his Ashram, he wrote:

"My ideology has no place for any kind of secrecy and I made it clear to him the self-surrender to the police was an act of national service. He accepted my view and offered himself on May 18, and the very next day I wrote to the District Collector that I would like to talk about his release for he had offered himself to the Government. And if the Government was not prepared to permit him to stay in my Ashram, the District Collector can come to my Ashram and take Prithvi Singh away. He wrote back that he had no power to order his release. He came the next day with the Superintendent of Jail and took Prithvi Singh away.

I was assured that he would be treated as an 'A' Class prisoner which I thought he richly deserved from the account of his life which he had written down at my instance. I am still of the opinion that he had done nothing to be ashamed of.... He told me that he was wholly devoting himself to the study of non-violence in all its aspects, particularly its applicability in the struggle for freedom and that other revolutionaries like him were thinking along these lines. They had no other aim in life but freedom of their country. He put his case so seriously and earnestly that I did not find it difficult to agree with him. Rather, I felt happy to be in their company on our pilgrimage."

Thus, began the new chapter in the life of Prithvi Singh in prison, from which he would be released (as per the history sheet appended to his case) in the year

1966 after serving life sentence. For Prithvi Singh, his past was dead on May 18 (on the day of his surrender to Gandhi), and a new birth began on May 19 (on the first day of his prison life) – this is what he wrote in his diary, in which he began to write his autobiography at the instance of Gandhi.

Soon thereafter, Gandhi continued to write persistently to the Viceroy for the release of Prithvi Singh, but all in vain. The British Government could not afford to oblige Gandhi on this count, for “they were not going to put their trust in Prithvi Singh, taking him to be the most dangerous prisoner ever held.”<sup>29</sup>

In prison, Prithvi Singh spent most of his time spinning, reading and writing his biography as advised by Gandhi. He was also encouraged by Gandhi to write to him regularly, giving an account of his activities. Gandhi’s responses to his letters are truly illuminating and instructive. To wit:

On August 24, 1938<sup>30</sup>–

“... I had your letters. I am glad you are having good treatment and that you have mental peace. I know that non-violence in thought is the most difficult of attainment. And yet without the co-operation of thought, non-violence in word and action does not become the all-pervading irresistible force that it undoubtedly is. Such non-violence comes through God’s grace. And that grace descends only on those who make ceaseless effort much greater surely than what we make to attain material ends....”

On October 5, 1938,<sup>31</sup> recognizing the importance of spinning in attaining non-violence in thought, Gandhi, *inter alia*, wrote:

“I must get hold of the new type of wool-spinning Charkha” for you.

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29 Id., at p. 212

30 Gandhi’s letter to Prithvi Singh, placed in Appendix at p. 318.

31 Gandhi’s letter to Prithvi Singh, placed in Appendix at p. 319

On December 21, 1938<sup>32</sup>–

“Though I do not want to publish your letter, as the authorities may not like its publication whilst you are still a prisoner. I am going to make judicious use of it amongst those who are still unconvinced of the matchless superiority of non-violence over violence. ...”

On May 21, 1939, after the completion of Prithvi Singh’s one year in prison, Gandhi, responding to his letters, *inter alia*, wrote:<sup>33</sup>

“It is satisfying to note that you have sufficient inner-experience. You would have noticed in my recent articles that I lay much importance to spinning as a means of developing a sense of non-violence. I take it as a symbol. The pleasure that one receives on working at the spinning-wheel for a long time does prevent him from getting ruffled easily at a small provocation. If the wheel is in order, one is apt to be lost in one’s own thought, for the harmonious sound of the wheel helps focused thinking: one who does not possess control over spinning, cannot be called a spinner.

I hope that in the second year of your jail life, you would acquire great skill in spinning for the development of your belief in Ahinsa. *Your experiment and experience would be very helpful, for I think that you are one of the few who are capable of understanding their mind. People are deceived more by themselves than by others...* [Emphasis added]

A year later, Gandhi’s emissary, Mahadev Desai, his private secretary, visited Prithvi Singh in jail. In his editorial note of *The Harijan* (September 1939) under the heading, “A Prisoner among Prisoners”, he recorded that he found Prithvi Singh in absolute cheerful exposition without bothering about his early release, and that he had “already spun eighty pounds of wool” during his sojourn in prison.<sup>34</sup> Gandhi

32 Gandhi’s letter to Prithvi Singh, placed in Appendix at p. 320.

33 Gandhi’s letter to Prithvi Singh, placed in Appendix at p. 321. See also, *id.*, at p. 216-217.

34 *Id.*, at p. 213.

felt extremely happy to learn that Prithvi Singh fully comprehended his “ideas on spinning” and that he had “no difficulty in understanding the working of Ahimsa.”<sup>35</sup>

The sudden breakout of World War II in September 1939 brought about an understanding between the Viceroy and Gandhi to co-operate with the British Government in “emergency”. This instantly resulted in the release of Prithvi Singh on September 23, 1939. And, the unexpected release brought him to the Ashram of Gandhi at Sevagram in Wardha, where he saw in person, how Gandhi, through the exemplary mode of his own conduct, was desperately trying to teach how to imbibe the principles of ‘truth and non-violence’ in our thought and action by leading a ‘simple life.’

#### **IV. Crystallization of value-principles of life from the interactive association between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh and their relevance in our contemporaneous world**

Under the mould of Gandhi, Prithvi Singh truly turned into a different human being. On the very day of his voluntary surrender to Gandhi on May 18, 1938, we may recall that Prithvi Singh himself recorded in his prison diary that his past was dead and a new life began. How has this metamorphosis come about? In order to find an answer to this seemingly simple question, we need to remember the first point of contact between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh, and then ask ourselves: Why did Prithvi Singh choose Gandhi and surrender himself and his fate to him? It was indeed a very difficult and dicey proposition, involving the issue of his ‘life and death.’

By the account of the unfolding story of the life of Prithvi Singh, the initiating thought was no other but the innate feeling of Trust or Faith in Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence. This very thought with due deliberation took him to Gandhi on the night of May 17, 1938. What did Gandhi do? Did he take him instantly mere at his words? No. Instead, he asked Prithvi Singh to come the next day with a brief written account of his life!

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35 See Gandhi's letter to Prithvi Singh, placed in Appendix at p. 217.

After putting down the few naked facts about his underground life of 16 years in his own handwriting, and that how he was sentenced to death in Lahore conspiracy case of 1915, and how he made the daring escape by jumping out of the running train, Prithvi Singh himself became somewhat suspect and shaky in his resolve to seeing Gandhi. He immediately contacted his confident communist friends and wanted to consult them before he took that critical step of surrendering, for it was pregnant with the possibility of his instant death by the British government on the basis of his own recorded handwritten statement without requiring any more corroborative evidence! Since nobody turned up to help him as promised, Prithvi Singh, albeit with a feeling of a little trust-deficit in his decision-making, met Gandhi on the night of the following day.

On bare reading of Prithvi Singh's candid account, we may recall what Gandhi said. He stated spontaneously that he would like him to re-consider his decision of voluntary surrender, as it would be 'next to impossible' for him (Gandhi) to get Prithvi Singh released, for he was already identified as the most "dangerous man to the British Government."<sup>36</sup> The decision on voluntary surrender was, thus, deferred for the time being.

What was the impact of this deferment? Prithvi Singh's trust in Gandhi as a saviour of the situation got confirmed and validated. Gandhi's trust in Prithvi Singh gained ascendancy in his estimation, for he saw and visualised his critical role in the struggle for freedom. This made Gandhi to plan at that very moment to correspond immediately with the Viceroy about his case being treated differently as that of a surrender by a political person and not by a fugitive.<sup>37</sup> This mutuality of trust turned out to be of crucial significance: Prithvi Singh's 'hesitant' surrender became truly 'voluntary,' as it was based upon 'understanding' the intent and spirit of Gandhi; and Gandhi also felt assured in his resolve, as he perceived the possibility of transforming a 'violent' man into a person pursuing the principle of 'non-violence' in his thought and actions for attaining the goal of freedom.

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36 See supra note 20 and the accompanying text.

37 See supra notes 24 and 25 along with the accompanying text.

This background of mutuality of 'trust' and 'understanding' on both sides led Prithvi Singh to enter prison life with a positive mind. And with this began a new relationship of 'teacher and taught' between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh! At the very threshold, as a first step to comprehend the principle of 'non-violence' (*Ahimsa*), Gandhi exhorted Prithvi Singh to make 'spinning-wheel' his constant companion. Which he did decisively, without entertaining an iota of doubt. So much so he spun about eighty pounds of wool within a short span of about eight-month-prison-life and proudly sent the same to Gandhi, his revered teacher, for his kind perusal!

What is the inherent linkage between 'non-violence' and 'spinning'? Through his several letters to Prithvi Singh in prison, Gandhi would explain to him how spinning on Charkha is a singular mode of going into 'meditation.' Spinning requires a person his utmost concentration. Slightest distraction or deviation in thoughts of the spinner would cause discordant between the spinning thread and the wheel, resulting in breaking of the thread. With ceaseless practice of spending hours at the spinning-wheel, the power of concentration increases, which, in turn, makes one's own inner thoughts pure and sublime, free from hatred and prejudices, and thereby inculcating the values of compassion, simplicity and self-sacrifice. Thus, the spinning exercise itself manifestly becomes, as Gandhi himself put it, "as a means of developing a sense of non-violence."<sup>38</sup> In Gandhi's estimate, Prithvi Singh is "one of the few who are capable of understanding" and realizing this simple truth in their 'thought and action'.<sup>39</sup>

In sum, the Gandhian principle of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) is not just an opposite of 'violence' (*Hinsa*), but an all pervading, comprehensive, concept, inhering the multiple core values of life. And 'the teacher-in-Gandhi' successfully taught those values to 'the student-in-Prithvi Singh'. This teacher-taught relationship between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh, in our understanding, is premised on the Upanishdic principle of lore, which clearly states that one can attain 'enlightenment' 'only through faith, understanding, and realization. This is what had happened in the

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38 See, supra note 33 and the accompanying text.

39 Ibid.

life story of Prithvi Singh under the benevolent influence of Gandhi.<sup>40</sup> In the light of this narrative of teacher–taught relationship between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh, we may now examine its relevance in the contemporary system of education in India.

Most recently, our modern system of education stands marked by the latest new National Educational Policy (NEP) of 2020. This policy has been searchingly formulated with the emphatic objective that the purpose of education is to “enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to society.”<sup>41</sup> With the formal announcement on July 29, 2020, the new NEP (2020) “replaces the 34-year-old National Policy on Education and is aimed at paving the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems to make India a global knowledge superpower,” proclaimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi.<sup>42</sup> Contextually he elaborated that there was a need “to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level,” and that under the NEP (2020) efforts are on “to introduce Agriculture subjects at middle–school level in villages.”<sup>43</sup> He sanguinely hoped that “the cooperation of the agricultural universities in developing ecosystems to streamline the flow of knowledge and expertise from campus to field” would indeed play a vital role in the reconstruction of society.<sup>44</sup>

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40 See supra notes 30–33, and the accompanying text, bringing out the correspondence between Gandhi and Prithvi Singh, showing how the teacher in Gandhi influenced the student in Prithvi Singh, so much so in the estimate of Gandhi, Prithvi Singh was “one of the few who are capable of understanding their mind.”

41 The NEP (2020) took about six years to fructify since January 2015, and is premised upon nearly two lakh solid suggestions emanating from unprecedented wide range consultation that took place with 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, 6,600 Blocks and 676 Districts in Committees constituted under the chairmanship of former cabinet secretary TSR Subramanian and eminent scientist K Kasturirangan. In this respect, the objective of successive national educational policies as reflected in University Education Commission (1948–49), Secondary Education Commission (1952–53), DS Kothari Commission (1964–65), and the National Policy of Education (1968) may be compared.

42 See, The Indian EXPRESS, August 30, 2020: “Need to take farm education to middle–school level!” The PM Modi made this elaboration after the virtual inauguration of the College and Administration building complex of the Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University, Jhansi (Haryana) on August 29, 2020.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.



Speaking at the Conclave on NEP (2020) organized by the Ministry of Education via video conference held on September 11, 2020, Prime Minister Modi spoke again on the inherent and implicit value of new education policy. He laconically stated that hitherto in our approach to education, “mark-sheet” has become a “pressure sheet” for students and a “prestige sheet” for parents!<sup>45</sup> Recognizing this “marks driven” approach as a “major drawback,” he emphatically recounted that NEP (2020) is essentially and basically focused on true “learning” by moving “away from high stakes tests” and “towards self-assessment and peer assessment.”<sup>46</sup>

This pragmatic perspective of NEP (2020), it needs emphasis to state, stood fully realized by Gandhi in his exposition of the prime principle of truth and non-violence. Prithvi Singh has alluded to this prime principle of Gandhi as an integral component of the daily life of an individual by observing:<sup>47</sup>

“Bapu had taught us to prepare compost manure but our countrymen have not yet appreciated this cheap method of doing so. It is not mere hygienic consideration, which keeps our latrines clean. It has an economic value which we should learn to understand and to carry out. On occasions, I have explained to others Bapu’s point of view. But most of the Ashramites did it, only to please Bapu and to earn his blessings.”

The new policy of education with its central focus on “personal accomplishment and enlightenment” of each and every individual, engaging one and all to contribute towards the gigantic task of socio-economic re-construction by being one’s own productive best, is indeed a historic step. In our own view, NEP (2020) resolutely rejects the policy of ‘exclusion’ premised upon the contrived processes of ‘selections’ through an incredibly high rate of ‘rejections’. This was the colonial concept of education. It was indeed a shrewd strategy of creating an elite class out of, and amongst, the Indian masses. It created a sharp divide rather than

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45 See, The Indian EXPRESS, September 12, 2020: “Mark-sheet shouldn’t be pressure sheet or prestige sheet.”

46 Ibid.

47 Legendary crusader, at 220.

uniting people. Gandhi vehemently opposed it. As early as during the Round Table Conference in 1931, Gandhi is reported to have said then in one of his speeches:<sup>48</sup>

“The beautiful tree of education was cut down by you British. Therefore, today, India is far more illiterate than it was 100 years ago.”

The colonial concept of education was good for them, but no good for us. Unfortunately, however, we have lingered on with their concept, perhaps unwittingly. Hitherto we have been structuring the whole range of course curriculum, right from the school to the university level, which would promote the prospect of gullible students to prepare for the high stake national competitive examinations. Seemingly, bearing in mind this state of slant in our system of education, a distinguished duo of a teacher and a researcher from a reputed IIT proffered their incisive comments. They were prompted to make their comments in the context of UGC mandating all the Universities to hold various entrance examinations before the stipulated date of September 30, 2020 despite the persisting pandemic of Covid-19. <sup>49</sup>Poignantly, they pointed out:<sup>50</sup>

“National competitive exams such as JEE (Joint Entrance Examination), NEET (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test) and GATE (Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering) have become the de-facto standards for education. The folly of this is well-known. They adversely impact the overall development of our youth. They encourage coaching, and intervene in the state’s ability to provide doctors and engineers from the local population. They distort the meaning and practice of science. And yet their impact on students and society has not been formally measured or accepted by

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48 This prophetic statement of Gandhi has been quoted by Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, while commenting upon the new NEP (2020): see, The Indian EXPRESS, August 31, 2020: “On education, looking ahead,” wherein he acclaimed the NEP as “an important milestone in India’s journey towards becoming a global knowledge superpower” inasmuch as it makes a significant departure from the hitherto held policy-perspective of education..

49 See, “UGC versus States,” by Milind Sohoni, who teaches at IIT Bombay and IIT Goa, and Oshin Dharap, a researcher at IIT Bombay, published in The Indian EXPRESS, August 27, 2020.

50 Ibid.

the MHRD. The most exceptionable is the UGC-NET, the qualifying exam for college teachers.” [Emphasis added]

Hopefully, this new NEP (2020), which is premised upon pragmatic suggestions, emanating from wide range consultations with the people at the grass-root<sup>51</sup> levels, is bound to be distinctly different, both in its core objectives and methods of implementation. It is people-centric in its objective, as it is expected to fulfil the diverse societal needs, taking individuals as the basic unit of the social group of which he or she is an integral part. In its implementation, the teachers are desired to perceive the problems of their students meaningfully and impart basic knowledge to resolve those problems skilfully through the presentation of real-life situations. Thus, both in the objective of the NEP (2020) and its eventual realization we do envisage and foresee the evolving process of individualization-cum-decentralization of the whole gamut of education. Gandhi, in our understanding of him through Prithvi Singh, did visualise the evolution of such a process in the realm of education when he strongly mooted the concept of self-sufficient and self-reliant villages functioning as a little Republic.<sup>52</sup> Happily, Prime Minister Modi’s emphatic statement of integrating the subject of agriculture into the curriculum at middle-school level under the NEP (2020)<sup>53</sup> recalls the vision of Gandhi.

Finally, the only question that remains to be considered is, whether Gandhi’s emphasis on living the life of austerity, simplicity, cleanliness, self-sacrifice, and self-dependence is of any relevance to us today? Prithvi Singh fully realized the value of these norms in his life as a practical exposition of the profound principle of truth and non-violence. He vouched for their validity during his sojourn in Gandhi Ashram at Wardha.

Our contemporaneous world is most conspicuously characterized by the Covid-19 phenomenon. This has caused and is still causing unabated and unprecedented hostile situation in the life-history of human existence. Surprisingly, it is pandemic

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51 See, supra note 41, and the accompanying text.

52 For the exposition of this concept, See, M.K. Gandhi, “Every Village A Republic,” chapter 24, in *India of my dreams*.

53 See supra notes 43-44, and the accompanying text.

across boundaries of nations, irrespective of their respective statuses in terms of rich or poor, high or low, developed or developing, geographical location, etc. It has turned lives upside down. Since its breakout in early March this year of 2020, scientists all over the world, with all their super scientific knowledge and neo-computerised-technological-advancements, are still desperately trying to meet the menace of Covid-19. However, what have they discovered till date? They have found the concept of LOCKDOWN, which is “one of the very few concepts” having “unanimous scientific backing.”<sup>54</sup>

Lockdown, in its functional realistic terms, means to stay put within the confines of your ‘home and hearth’! This has led us into a very strange situation, for that instantly impacted almost all the facets of our life. All the educational institutions, schools, colleges and universities, for instance, stood shut. Movements of all goods and services stood suspended likewise. Any national or international travel is sanctioned most grudgingly. This, indeed, in itself is the biggest shocking jolt in the wake of national Lockdown!

Way has to be found to come out of this turmoil. Tentative solution has been found, as if by common concurrence unreservedly and universally, in the form of evolving the rule of ‘social distancing’ backed by the mandatory norm of wearing ‘mask’ by individuals.<sup>55</sup> This has resulted into relaxing the inexorable rule of national Lockdown. Such a relaxation has hitherto come to us in successive phases of Lockdown, permitting relatively more freedom and lesser restrictions on movement of people and ‘goods and services. But still by scrupulously observing the norms of social distancing and wearing mask.<sup>56</sup> Such relaxation, by no means, should be construed as freedom from the fearsome Covid-19! It is still with us and,

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54 See, the lead editorial, “India’s true Covid-19 test,” Hindustan Times, September 7, 2020.

55 See, The Indian EXPRESS, September 17, 2020: “Protections like Wearing Masks, which proved divisive in the United States, are now widespread on the Continent.” Even the USA is falling in line, see The Indian EXPRESS, September 18, 2020: “Masks protect better than a vaccine would: CDC director (USA).”

56 See the editorial, “Lonely in the crowd – India is reopening after half a year in confinement, but social distancing is taking half of the joy out of it,” The Indian EXPRESS, September 12, 2020.

with all scientific predictions, it is likely to stay with us for indeterminate time to come.<sup>57</sup>

The continuing Covid-19 phenomenon has prompted us to realize the mantra of 'Stay home, and stay safe,' almost as an integral part of our social living. With indefinite prolongation of coronavirus, now for months together since its outbreak in early March 2020 and showing no signs of retrieval or abating, the world is "learning to live with coronavirus," else we are destined to be mowed down by the sheer weight of "crippled economies."<sup>58</sup> The glooming prospect of Covid-19 has, thus, led us to discover new normative rules of social living. We are now cooking our own meals, washing our own clothes, cleaning our own toilets and bathrooms without the availability of part-time services of maids residing in close-by colonies. We are, per force, required to maintain our own lawns and kitchen garden without seeking the assistance of a regular or part-time professional and not-so-professional gardeners. With the lurking fear, turning out increasingly to be more real than imaginary, of being caught by coronavirus, we are learning afresh to forego the pleasure of going to theatres, restaurants, excursions, et al. All this is significantly and substantially changing the pattern of our living in the matters of consumption.<sup>59</sup>

Aren't the new emerging patterns of life leading us to be self-contained and self-reliant to the best possible extent? Aren't we learning to live the life of simplicity by critically differentiating the essentials of life from the non-essential ones? May be, we might be motivated to move towards re-establishing the social order, whose foundational values are rested on the genuine welfare concern for 'others', as passionately pursued by Gandhi. May be, with the stamp of Gandhi-

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57 With all cautious estimates, the WHO chief Tendros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on the analogy of 1918 Spanish flue, has surmised that Covid-19 pandemic "will last less than 2 years." However, he added that "in our situation now with more technology and of course with more connectedness, the virus has a better chance of spreading: it can move fast because we are more connected now." See, The Indian EXPRESS, August 23, 2020.

58 See, The Indian EXPRESS, September 17, 2020: "Even as cases are on the rise, Europe is learning to live with coronavirus." "In the early days of the pandemic, President Emmanuel exhorted the French to wage 'war' against the coronavirus. Today, his message is to 'learn how to live with the virus.'"

59 The most recent Reserve Bank of India Report has made the headline in the national press on August 26, 2020 indicating the impact of Covid-19: "Consumption shock severe, economic recovery will take longer, poorest hit the hardest: RBI" See, The Indian EXPRESS, August 26, 2020

Prithvi Singh's first-hand pragmatic experience, at least with respect to some of the new emerging norms under the shadow of Covid-19, prove to be a 'blessing in disguise'! Don't we feel motivated to willingly accept and adopt those so-called 'abnormal' norms as truly healthy 'normal' norms of life even after the impending danger of coronavirus is over?<sup>60</sup>

In sum, in all the policy programmes moving towards making India atmanirbhar (self-dependent) with all such small initiatives as Swatchhbharat abhiyan, movement to have clean closed toilets in villages (from satyagrah to swatchhagrah), etc., aren't we re-visiting Gandhi? Gandhi's experiment with Prithvi Singh in the exposition of the complex concept of truth and non-violence, thus, continues to be inspirational, inasmuch as it teaches us how to make our social living simple, self-contained and self-sufficient.<sup>61</sup> As a pragmatic example of teacher-taught relationship, we, the teachers, also need to learn and imbibe from Gandhi-Prithvi Singh's experience, how the mutuality of trust is perhaps the most critical element in the whole process of learning and imparting education.

Besides, happily, the very name and association of Gandhi still evokes admiration and respect for him and his philosophy of truth and non-violence the world over. How else we should explain that a simple pair of spectacles once worn by Gandhi while being in South Africa would fetch 260,000 pounds in an online auction!<sup>62</sup> Herein lies the value of Gandhi not only THEN, but even NOW!

60 See, The Indian EXPRESS, August 28, 2020: "New NORMAL" by a veteran, Commander NK Singla. He has candidly stated that the public is restricting itself to the purchase of only the essentials, the utility stuff, and getting used to making do with whatever available, the demand of luxury items like jewellery, expansive clothing, watches, shoes, etc. has evaporated. It is concluded by saying that "Corona is changing our behaviour about shopping and purpose of movement. The technological interventions may make many of these changes last."

61 The writer had the privilege of being the son-in-law of Baba Prithvi Singh. He got married to his distinguished daughter Dr. Pragya Prabha Prithvi Singh, who joined Punjab Civil Medical Service [PCMS] after her selection through Punjab Public Service Commission. This proximity gave him an exquisite opportunity of observing the impact of Gandhi on Prithvi Singh. To wit, Prithvi Singh was the first one to start in his native village gobar gas plant, providing gas for cooking and lighting, manure for organic farming, and closed clean toilets, maintenance of a water tank for providing clean water for animals, and procuring a healthy Bull for improving progeny of cows and bullocks!

62 See, The Indian Express, August 23, 2020: "Spectacles 'worn by Gandhi' sets auction record."

# Contemporary Crisis and Violence: Significance of Mahatma Gandhi for Peacemaking Interventions

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## Abstract

India is embracing rapid changes to match its steps with the world. Contemporary value systems are undergoing metamorphosis bringing with its crash consumerism and undue emphasis on money, power and cut-throat competition. We have blindly embraced a set of value system but have deviated a bit from our own time-tested value system. The outbreak of pandemic has created tough economic, political and social conditions.

Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy in the contemporary world post outbreak of pandemic has increased tremendously. Economic uncertainty, crumbling and shrinking economy putting major strain on livelihood, crumbling medical infrastructure and social distancing and isolation, job loss, financial insecurity in future are leading to discontent and turmoil, flaring up emotions and resultant violence.

As any challenge also opens doors of opportunity, the current pandemic is forcing us to rethink the way we have developed social norms, challenge it and create growth and prosperity based on solid principles. Seven sins of society as visualized by Gandhiji needs being explored once again to bring some order and sanity in the mad race we have entered. A philosophy based on time tested values can have potential to give positive direction to society at large and nation.



As we analyse the current values (seven sins) there are scope for long term and short-term interventions questioning some basic assumptions which have strong roots now in contemporary society. Some changes are radical in nature which requires policy interventions and concerted government and public efforts, from creating awareness to addressing serious violations. There is also scope for each of us to re-examine our own value system, we are keen on others following it, but when it comes to self, we lose courage to take it in the right spirit.

We need to question basic assumptions which are accepted and have deep roots. We need support because fighting might have a well-entrenched value system that can invite backlashes and hardships, and we need courage and resilience in our efforts to create a progressive society for future.

## **Contemporary Crisis and Violence**

***The Unusual*** - There has been something unusual in the air since the last six months (starting March 2020). Roads are desolate, lifeless and idle. Lockdown caged the entire humanity and clipped their wings dramatically restricting every movement. People were confined to the four walls of their houses. Economic activities have been stifled. We see multiple business folding itself, job loss is real, small business becoming unsustainable, indicating protracted economic recession. Some flutter in economic activities are seen after unlock-down started. Some relaxation in movement was given for the people to venture out and start sagging work/business. The Economic Times (Sept 2) reported Indian Gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by a record 23.9% in April-June from a year earlier, against a Reuters poll forecast for an 18.3% contraction. The Economic Times, September 11 quoted Moody's which projects Indian Economy to contract 11.5% this fiscal. 41 lakh youth lost their jobs in India due to COVID 19 pandemic – ILO-ADB report (The Economic Times, August 18).

However, this was an uneasy time. India has seen some flare up inside and outside at the borders. There is unrest at the borders. It is getting aggravated every day creating a war like condition. Parallel to this, lots of hues and cries

are being raised by various media on various issues, mainly violent reactions like agitations, protests and violence. There is a political bickering happening to maintain and save their hegemony, a bitter exchange of words flying uncensored reaching every household through various media in no time. There are cases of family unrest, death, suicide, domestic violence, and child abuse reported in the media every day. Natural calamities like cyclone, earthquake, flood are making headlines. However, special mention can be done about the one of its kind internal migration which rocked Indian sensibilities.

***Pathetic plight of the labour force*** - The pain is written everywhere. Pandemic situation has driven millions of workers from urban economic hubs to their native states and later to their respective places. The journey had been arduous and for some, it continues. Many workers started early with their entire family including octogenarian parents, pregnant wife, toddlers, putting luggage on their head and started their arduous journey on foot under the sun blazing at 40 to 45-degree Celsius, not knowing the exact route to their destination or where the next food will come from. Bluffed by their arrangers, they gathered to board the trains and ended up getting brutalized. Few started getting lucky to either get some arranged busses or travel when the train started plying. Some people found golden opportunities to fleece and bleed the commuters further and encashed on their misery. This mass exodus was unprecedented in independent India, seen only after partition travails. Back at their respective states, they went for another endurance test with procedures of sanitization and quarantine with a stigma of COVID carriers written on their forehead. What lies ahead for many is unemployment and probably rejection and isolation due to pandemic scare. Now after six months, with unemployment and the wolf at door, a reverse migration has been started. Despite endurance and odds of return, in six months' time again a large chunk is daring to move back amongst raging corona statistics.

To move further, another shocking reality is the situation arising out of people pushed back at home either due to lockdown, quarantine or sagging income.

## **Challenging Domestic scenarios**

Recent data released by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) suggest that the nationwide lockdown has led to a rapid increase in cases of domestic violence (Times of India, May 18.) Since most of the activities have come to a halt, recently many horrific news items have got eyeballs of everyone sitting back at their home, a bit scared, hoping for better. The Hindustan Times, July 3, reported surge in child abuse during COVID 19 pandemic – in just one-month number of new cases rose by 1493% compared with the same period in the previous three years. Pandemic has impacted both economic and social fabric.

## **Pandemic scare**

There is unprecedented and irreversible change around us leading to a new normal. Everyone is fighting an unknown invisible enemy (COVID 19). The situation is deteriorating from bad to worse every day, with a crumbling economy and medical infrastructure. There is social unrest as no cure is at the sight. So far, we do not have control over spiking reported figures (Unreported figures are just mystery). On September 29, reported cases of corona infected people across the globe was 33,682, 430 with a death toll of 1,008,518. India amongst second largely infected nations has 6,193,966 cases with a death toll of 96,854.

## **The reaction**

We have seen the entire humanity reacting to the pandemic in a wide range of sensitivity and care... from being very sensitive to being highly insensitive, both exposing humane and demonic faces of humanity.

The Central Government has geared up to move towards Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self dependent India) and with the help of states are trying to push the economy out of the current decline. An economic package of Rs. 20 Lakh-crore has been announced by the Union Finance Minister in five tranches which accounts for

nearly 10% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Corporates are taking risk and trying to bring economic activities back on the track. There have been many NGOs which fed lakhs of people during lockdown free of cost. There were volunteers and organizations coming forward to help people reach their destinations and be with their family. There were lots of corona warriors – doctors, nurses, para-medic, policemen and many administrative agencies who rose up to the occasion and tried to serve people selflessly, many such warriors lost their life in the process.

In contrast to this, other cruder and cruel faces also surfaced. Right after the first lockdown, merciless beating and punishments by police to those who ventured on the streets was sad and sadistic. Mainly homeless, poor or migrating population become targets, along with few wilful violators. Cases of fleecing of patients, mistreatment and refusal to admit despite available beds by few hospitals have also been reported. Tamilnadu government has to step into penalise private hospitals fleecing COVID patients (Deccan Herald, August 1). Some shocking news also surfaced – “COVID-19 patients treated worse than animals, bodies found in garbage: Supreme Court” was the headline of the Hindustan Times on June 12, dead bodies being stacked next to the Covid patients. There were rows over dead bodies, The Week (June 16) reported suffering due to overcrowding at Mumbai, with grieving families waiting for hours in long queues outside crematoriums, at times only to be asked to return.

It really is scary. A true crisis brewing and refusing to subside despite best efforts of the central and state governments and non-government agencies. We need to move beyond immediate transactional bickering to build up a wider vision and big picture of this unusual time.

## **The Unprecedented times**

**True Crisis – Herman B. "Dutch" Leonard**, Ph.D. Harvard University, Professor of Business Administration and Co-chair of the Social Enterprise Initiative at Harvard Business School in his YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=levSfmArTRQ>) differentiates between routine emergency and true crisis.

According to him, a true crisis can be characterized by significant novelty which requires innovative problem solving in chaotic situations on a real time basis. In routine emergencies, like cyclones, floods, accidents, earthquakes although impact may be strong, we know what to do and we can plan resources.

We face lots of crises in life which can be threatening and change the course of our life. For example, an accident on the highway, either killing or maiming the breadwinner of a family can bring irreversible change to the entire family badly impacting them in the long run. But this is the crisis we can plan for (Highway police, ambulance), have known remedial measures (hospitals with doctor who know exactly what to do) and known the course of action to follow (under observation in hospital and later recuperating under trained skilled nurse). We also can have medical insurance policy for covering health hazards and life insurance for some financial stability to family in the fatal cases.

But what about the current unique crisis that caught us unprepared and has a huge impact in a short period of time. We have seen pandemics in the past restricted to a nation or a city, but the scale at which COVID 19 has happened is never seen in history and perhaps no one planned infrastructure and remedy for such impact and scale. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) as on September 29, almost 213 countries are impacted with 33,682,966 infected and death toll of 1,008,963, with recovery of 24,988,963 people. The current crisis has brought the entire world to a grinding halt. It is escalating with intense impact and no available cure at the sight. Melinda Gates, a billionaire philanthropist and co-chair of the foundation, said in May that scientists and health officials may find a vaccine that is effective in preventing Covid-19 by the end of this year "if we're lucky." Even if scientists do find a vaccine in record time, they would still need to make millions and eventually billions of doses of the vaccine for the general public, she said. There are more than 7.6 billion people in the world, and some of the vaccines under development require more than one dose, she said. "We have never, never as a globe made a vaccine of this type before nor of this scale before ever. So this is not a quick nor swift process," (CNBC, July 22) With no vaccine in sight and medical infrastructure crumbling down fast, there is helplessness to arrest the damage magnifying every day.

Such an unprecedented crisis brings with it serious challenges of adjustment. As mentioned above, sometimes it instigates uncontrolled violent reactions. Megan O'Donnell, Amber Peterman and Alina Potts (April 3, 2020 blog) mentions about the conditions in pandemic which triggers violence, major conditions are economic insecurity and poverty related stress, quarantine and social isolation, disaster and conflict related unrest and instability, exposure to exploitative relationships due to changing demographics and reduced health services. It is important for us to understand the nature of the violent reaction we are seeing around and find a plausible way to handle it, before it escalates to a chaotic condition.

## Types of violence

According to Freud, there are two basic instincts – Eros or life instinct which serves the purpose of survival and racial propagation and Thanatos or death instinct, an unconscious wish to die as all living processes tend to return to the stability of the inorganic world. An important derivative of the death instinct is the aggressive drive. Aggressiveness is self-destruction turned outwards against substitute objects, Hall and Lindzey (1985). Inner turmoil and failure to meaningfully handle agitation inside can pour to the external world.

Leopold Ballek, in the manual for Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) mentioned about the various types of aggression which can be observed. In the current pandemic episode, also we are witnessing various forms of violence, probable reason can be inner turmoil, fear, panic and desperation created through current economic and social conditions.

**Verbal** – Emotional flare ups leading to verbal altercations are common. We have seen lots of manifestation now in our public and private life in terms of abusive languages and emotional exploitation or blackmailing. Contemporary media narrates the story with strong emotions, many a time debates turning inflammatory and ugly. With limited social space to manoeuvre around due to restricted movement and COVID precaution, high rate of inflammatory media input consumption is becoming another epidemic. Such aggressions are also

common in corporate and personal life, where power imbalance and adverse situations triggers such violence. With social media in overdrive, verbal and abusive trolls are quite common these days. Personal immaturity and instability play a big role.

**Physical** aggression turns into use of physical force with an intention to hurt. It can be manifested in different ways such as

**a. Physical and Social**, it indicates violence not intended to harm, but help others through strict and firm behaviour as a mother taming the child or police overpowering the criminal. We saw law enforcing agencies found it real tough to restraint wilful violators during lockdown and had to resort to lathi charge.

**b. Physical and asocial**, physical aggression against inanimate objects like breaking glass windows, or throwing objects in tantrums. Many of the reported domestic violence have such aggressions in common.

**c. Physical and antisocial** – Adding to the previous two mentioned by Bellak, the third one has now become a serious threat. Tolerance of people has gone down leading to agitations and bystander apathy. Breaking social norms and laws like spraying bullets on school children, terrorist killing civilians are antisocial acts of aggression. Floyd's death prompted a surge of demonstrations associated with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that quickly spread from Minneapolis throughout the country. Between 26 May, the day after Floyd's death, and 22 August, ACLED records over 7,750 demonstrations linked to the BLM movement across more than 2,440 locations in all 50 states and Washington, DC. (<https://acleddata.com>). \$1 billion-plus riot damage is the most expensive in insurance history (<https://www.axios.com>).

**d. Destruction** arson and destruction such as Taj Hotel attack with no intention to steal but to destruct huge property for making a political or military statement, Self-destruction by inflicting injury on self or ultimately by committing suicide. There has been an increase in self-harm and suicide ideation among people since the Covid 19 pandemic hit, says a study "Covid 19 Blues" conducted by Suicide Prevention India Foundation (SPIF). The rate of relapse of people who

have recovered from mental health condition has risen and due to spike in need for their services, mental health professionals are also experiencing caregiver fatigue. (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>).

In the current crisis, as the days are passing by, we see all kinds of violence in private, professional and public life. In this new normal, we must have a strong philosophical base, a guiding force which can sober up the intensity of violence and propel us towards a symbiotic and harmonious living.

“An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behaviour” says Viktor Frankl. He survived concentration camp and analysed behaviour of people when they were thrown into a life-threatening environment. A quick look at the same can help us in analysing current scenarios, particularly in India.

***Viktor Frankl – Pursuit for Meaning to guide through difficult times (book: Man’s Search for meaning)***

Victor Frankl was holocaust survivor, famous for meaning centred school of psychology – Logo therapy. His much famous book “Man’s search for meaning” brings in an approach to survive difficult situations in our life. Viktor Frankl mentioned three phases when we get into challenging situations, endure hardship, and finally get out of it and survive. Although unlike pandemic which is a pan world phenomena it was restricted to a region and group, we can still derive some generalization about the process through which humans survived in a threatening, dangerous and testing environment.

**Shock** – (Shock as expressed by captives during the initial admission phase to the camp – letting go of the ideas and identity associated with earlier life) – Similar shock waves are making rounds across the globe and India in particular. Emotions are getting flared up these days; in desperation we have started wondering “why me”? Blame game has become vicious, to find scapegoats and target a group for debacle. According to Washington Post, April 2, (<https://www.washingtonpost.com>) “Gatherings last month at the headquarters of a prominent Muslim missionary group are emerging as India’s first “super-spreader” event, complicating efforts to control rising infections in this nation of 1.3 billion people. More than 400 confirmed



cases and at least 10 deaths across the country – stretching from Tamil Nadu in the south to Kashmir in the north – have been linked to people who attended events at the Tablighi Jamaat Centre near a historic shrine in India’s capital”.

When India went for lockdown, people protested the dictate to stay at home and started going out. Police used force to push them back to their home. Confined to their houses, domestic violence and child abuse cases were reported in few households. It is taking time to come to terms with the new harsh reality. Blatant violation of lockdown rules, like attending parties, throwing birthday bashes, escaping quarantine, was done by those who had affiliations with people in power. Brutal lathi charge by police and later attack on doctors and health workers reflected the agitated mentality of law enforcing agencies and public at large. Gradually as the situation aggravates, shock is converted to apathy.

**Apathy** – (Apathy after becoming accustomed to camp existence, in which inmates’ values only that which helps themselves and their friends survive.) The way we are reacting to the crumbling medical infrastructure, rough treatment of patients in many hospitals, fleecing patients under life threat, showed how people are demonstrating emotional blunting. Disregarding human dignity while disposing dead bodies were in some cases pathetic. Urban insensitivity to deal with labour migration from urban economic centres to rural areas was shocking. The entire sordid events were captured on video and reached every household to showcase such harrowing experiences. Salary cut and job loss also is coming at a time when people need it most. Desperate to start work for economic gain, some people started undermining the importance of safety citing “herd immunity” as narrative. However, prolonged apathy can have unwanted strain on people and can lead to uncomfortable reactions in days to come.

**Reaction** – (Reaction in form of depersonalization, moral deformity, bitterness, and disillusionment if he survives and is liberated.) Peak and community spread is still to come in India. As lockdown is relieved to accommodate survival and business, chances and threat is looming large. We do not know the time frame in which the impact of COVID 19 can be contained, it may take another few months or a year or two. Economists are predicting fiscal deficits, long economic recession, negative GDP growth, and hardship due to evaporating jobs and loss

of business. We can predict a few impacts after COVID menace is contained. The experience of misery and hardship for a large population during these times may leave bitterness in many hearts and subsequent difficult behaviour from their sides in the future. Moral deformity and depersonalization can lead to overt or covert violence.

It indicates that coming time may be tough, leading to rise in many untoward incidents. We need some strong philosophy to guide us through it if we want to sail smoothly. How to maintain harmony and peace at personal, social, professional, and even at the national level, is the quest with which we really have to struggle. Victor's idea of search for meaningfulness rhymes with ideas of Gandhiji to find values and true-life philosophy to guide us in life.

As we talk about violence and peaceful mediation, Philosophy of Gandhiji can really be appropriate. I wonder what would have been the approach of Mahatma Gandhi, a great crisis leader in current pandemic situation.

Ban Ki Moon quotes Gandhiji on International day of Non-Violence, October 2, 2013 (<https://www.un.org/>) "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent." (Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, May 21, 1925). How true in the current context, where intolerance level in society has gone up and we are evidencing sporadic violence more often in public life.

His view on peace was equally emphatic making everyone individually responsible for self and collective peace, quoting him "Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances." The world view he advocated is very relevant in the current context. "There is no path to peace, peace is the path" (Mahatma Gandhi).

## Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy

*He who has a “why” to live for can bear almost any “how” ... Friedrich Nietzsche*

We all are looking up to the source of inspirations, as current world view has brought considerable unrest in socio-economic and political fabric. We all are looking for the meaning in a chaotic world.

Contemporary situation has aggravated disharmony with no solutions at hand in near future. New norms need to be explored and we better replace all the glaring social evils with some plausible alternatives to sustain humanity in the long run. As William Hazlitt said, “Those who are at war with others are not at peace with themselves.” An unsettled and agitated society can be a potential land mine for present and future. Every crisis is pregnant with the opportunity; it is for the leaders in every field to deliver the opportunity by their concerted efforts. Time has come to format and reconfigure the entire system and pave way for Principle Centred Authentic Leadership.

The philosophy of Gandhiji has stood as the light house for generations to take inspiration and direction. It is now high time to challenge current prevalent wrong basic assumptions and promote authentic principle centred leadership at every sector of the business and every facet of social, political and personal life. If we miss the bus now, we will be guilty of propagating seven sins. “Seven social sins” was first published in Young India magazine on October 22, 2015 by Mahatma Gandhi. Examples of each evil are plenty in contemporary society. Due to current pandemic challenges, it has got further aggravated. I would like to focus on below explanations to look for some basic (long term) solutions for peace intervention. It needs strong political will and concerted efforts of the society to bring harmony in our life. Prescriptions of Gandhijee may not be easy but can be very powerful to give a positive direction to contemporary society. My firm belief is that it starts with the child rearing with high values, character building at an academic institution and fair game, transparency, and honesty in our social, economic, and political life. It connects well with Viktor Frankl's search for meaning. We need higher order compelling meaning for life, rather than transactional cut throat day to day living.

The seven social sins are common practices in all spheres of our life, which we have institutionalized over a period of time by weaving fallacious arguments around it and strengthening wrong assumptions. It has almost become a way of life, unchallenged. This jinx needs to be broken, even if it looks utopian in first place initially right now. I am sure, if we get back to the basics and rectify errors there, we will learn our lessons well from pandemic and will move towards a world order based on principles leading to our growth and happiness.

**1. Wealth without work – (Concept: Getting something for nothing, earn even if you do not deserve)**

We have now graduated as a generation of gold diggers looking for quick gains in a short period of time managing resources and other human beings for personal profits and gains. It is even better if we do not have to work hard for it. The need of the hour is to build trust in the social and political agencies and institutions like administration, police, judiciary, corporate, academics, banks, and all other fields. Credentials and credibility should be built on fair play, transparency, and honesty. Restoring dignity of labour is critical to success. At macro level it indicates serious reforms if we want to touch the root cause, policies which can eliminate corruption in law enforcing agencies and other service government, corporate and non-government institutions. We have long been dabbling with symptoms and creating records of logging our personal efforts. It will require strong political will and a forward-looking vision to hit the root cause. But we do not always look at the macro level, shirking our responsibilities at the micro level. Nation building and institution building demands concerted efforts of the government and the public.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Manipulating market (Hoarding, Black-marketing, insider trading)	1. Labour migration and their hardship and exploitation (Cheap labour without obligation).	There is enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
2. Tax evasion	2. Instigating riot to get into power and prominence without much public credentials.	1. Building trust in the institution, especially those with high impact public life and social values
3. Get rich quick schemes	3. Scams to get rich fast through short cuts (cheating people on promises of high returns on dubious deals and endeavours).	2. Credentials and Credibility – Hard work, consistent higher value-based performance with sense of fair play
4. Speculation business	4. School fee-paid facility charges not returned in lockdown, but salary cut for teachers.	3. Education and awareness – High need build character, service orientation, and sense of justice
5. Perks without fulfilling responsibility	5. Fake sanitizers sold in market with high price	4. Restoring dignity of labour – Protected through law and enforced strictly
6. Network marketing, over borrowing, credit card	6. Cancelled holidays - no refund, (use deposited money for other purpose, as it is trapped)	5. Block wilful defaulters – It is not government that needs reform, it is public which should be directed to enforce higher values in personal and public life
7. Subprime crisis		
8. Playing stock market		
9. Tenant farmer (Zamindari)		

Relevance to the current conditions – Pandemic has really highlighted rift and gulf in our society, a group of hard-working sincere people and the ones who have created umpire and hegemony, initially through hard work (by few generations) and later by abuse of power and money.

One example that comes out staring us on the face is labour exploitation. It reminds us of the feudal society of zamindars and their bonded labour. Maybe the situation is not that grim, as we have become a more sensitive society with strong law enforcing agencies. But a comfortable easy life and fear of losing our accumulations has made us look the other way, when we need to confront. That makes practical sense, but institutionalized misuse of power. A certain group starts benefiting from cowardice and fear psychosis. Cartel, syndicates, underworld, anti national elements and strong political, administration, police, judiciary and corporate nexus have silenced common man who is too busy to earn their living and survive. This deep rooted problem needs deeper incision and strong hit on the root cause. The shrill cry of the nation must be heard to protect hard working sincere common men from con-men.

***2. Pleasure without conscience – (Concept - Immature, greedy, sensuous – What is in it for me WIIFM, look for self-interest with hedonistic tendencies)***

Immediate gratification of the needs, inflated ego, and nefarious ambitions sometimes propel us on the path which leads us to ignore sane voices from within and around. Third phase of reaction according to Viktor Frankl leads to depersonalization, moral deformity, and bitterness. If we may get complex social situations in another 6 months, society is unprepared to deal with such complications arising out of the hardships endured during the current pandemic assault. The first victim will be the conscience of mass and leaders and then the entire nation will be subjected to extreme conditions. Deep rooted corruption is one such example, once to give taste of blood, it corrupts conscience and then it becomes difficult to get rid of it for meaner objectives of few.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Abandoning spouse, children, parents for career	1. Celebrity party during lockdown infecting many in current pandemic times	Pleasure should come from within the soul, excitement from serving the needy.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
2. Sexual harassment at work	2. Smuggling alcohol in government vehicles during lockdown (blatant misuse of government machinery when people are struggling for bare essentials)	1. Change in academic curriculum to build character and higher conscience, sense of responsibility and accountability towards self and others
3. Advertisements inviting executives to indulge in mindless consumerism	3. Harassing animals for tiktok video or fun – video making of victims for cheap popularity and TRP	2. Campaign to create awareness of malpractices and laws to protect by strict enforcements
4. Drug and substance abuse – destroying life of many and encouraging anti national elements to have access to money	4. Contractual appointments of teachers - put to various odd tasks unrelated to teaching	3. Rewarding and recognizing right role models in the society
5. Hunting for fun – getting kick after kill.	5. Disproportionate remunerations and perks of CEOs – compared to their own people	

On a short term basis, a serious awareness campaign and stricter law enforcement is necessary to curb tendencies to transgress social, statutory, government norms and law of the land. However, solution is not short term in nature, when the problem lies deep, merely addressing the symptom doesn't help. We require a next phase of academic reforms focussed to building higher social values.

Decentralization of the economic activities can also bring down pressure from urban hubs, which also have become hubs of vices. Such decentralization can have levelling effect for glaring economic disparity across geography.

Look at the specific example of handling the labour forces migrating to their native places in pandemic times. India has been touted as a country with cheap labour. You can demand world class performance and put them through a demanding schedule, but when it comes to benchmarking wages and other facilities you remember local market norms. Managing a large number of labour force

clambering in urban centres, exposes workers to manipulation by subcontractors and companies alike. It is easy to turn blind eyes to some uncomfortable facts and easy to camouflage reality with cunning arguments. Current pandemic exposed the underbelly. So, leaders want the pleasure of cheap labour to earn margins, but their conscience doesn't prick a bit when the labour force are stranded and exposed. They try to cover up for lapses with narratives from PR agencies and media manipulations.

***3. Knowledge without character – (Imbalance between High Intellect and Low Character – HILC – as dangerous as it can, if unleashed on unsuspecting common man)***

It is a very dangerous proposition to have an aberration of character when strong intellect is backed with support of high office, money, power, or position. It is like giving a high-powered car in the hands of teenagers high on drugs. Negative impact can be powerful and destructive. Let us take the migration of labour force example once again. Workers are sitting ducks, their own ignorance, their mind whitewashed by their handlers and their pathetic and precarious financial conditions (sometimes on hostile turfs) makes them prey of those whose character makes it easy to use them at their own whims. However, as migration created scarcity of labour, they have started showing open concerns in contrast. There is a paradigm shift in their narrative, exposing their true colour and character. The fight is on an uneven ground and it exposes workers. Pseudo integrity, compassion, care, and honesty are more used as the weapon of manipulation and tact. Events like this force us to reorganize the significance of compassion and high integrity.

It is important to reiterate Stephen Covey who professed differentiation between character ethics and personality ethics – difference is “what you actually are” and “how you appear to be”. Issues like integrity, fidelity, compassion, contribution, responsibility, fairness, justice are typical character ethics. Whereas how we manage our look, image, public relations, communication skill, management techniques, influencing skills, dressing sense are personality ethics which can be polished with some care in a short period of time. Character ethics must be



inculcated over a period, while personality ethics can be managed through some intense training.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Misuse of information and system (Few Doctor threaten to fleece patients creating fear psychosis by providing distorted information)	1. Patients fleeced by medical community (Doctors HI-LC)	Knowledge gives you power, character gives you respect
2. Using authority for personal gain – police and media both have almost institutionalized the same (barring few sane voices everywhere)	2. Ticketing scam for migrant labour (Authorities HI-LC)	1. Public censor for unethical practices – right social norms need to be built up to counter economic reasons for social crimes
3. Exploiting loopholes in the crisis, understanding weakness of system (overcharging for bed in hospitals)	3. Stealing personal data through apps, Spying – (Data management companies HI-LC)	2. Stronger law enforcement as deterrent – Police, administration, media, legislature, and judiciary if made value based and corruption free holds prospects of bright future
4. Degree to earn higher salary, creating book worm with no social skills and values	4. Hacking bank accounts, social media accounts, like twitter, facebook and government portals (IT professionals HI-LC)	
	5. Cybercrimes – cyber bullying, financial embezzlements (IT experts HILC)	

Public censors for unethical practices and stronger law enforcement can be a deterrent to those who are wilful defaulter and scamsters. Setting the right example in public life is very important. Judicial and police reform can bring confidence in people. People should see demonstration and delivery of justice within reasonable time – justice delayed is justice denied.

**4. Commerce (Business) without morality (Ethics) – (Concept - Using questionable means to serve business with an intention to get undue gains through wrong means and practices)**

Running a business is like being at war. Some corporate houses with deep pockets can show some facades with their balance sheet magically managed by highly paid accountants, tax experts and auditors. Those with shallow pockets and tough competition fight for survival through innovative techniques of evasion. It is like that experiment with a monkey and its baby put in a tub with rising water. Once the water rises above nose level, the monkey puts down the baby and stands on it to save its life. Morality is there till it serves purpose and end, till the water reaches the nose. Power dynamics are tilted towards those who are in commands.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Use of unfair means to make money – bribery, embezzlement, theft, extortion, contraband and dangerous substances business e.g, drugs	1. Hoarding for profiteering during lockdown – essentials goods withhold in storage for artificially inflating the price and charging exponentially by creating artificial crisis	It takes 20 years to build reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you will do things differently.
2. Managing and manipulating balance sheet (Corporate Bikini – exposes everything except vitals)– paid accountants and tax experts to dress up balance sheet	2. Forcing staff to travel during pandemic – creating difficult work situation to eliminate staff on trivial grounds	1. Recognizing right practices in public life – a larger proportion of fair game players should over shadow persons with questionable means – need to evolve interventions at national state and local levels.
3. Rationalization and justification for corporate treachery – fabricated as next strategic move to grow business	3. Wilful loan defaulters – we have NPAs created in banks thanks to many wilful defaulters with access to political power centres	2. Positive reinforcement – There is need of role models, but positive role models cannot flourish until protected and supported by right agencies, people and corporate mandate

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
4. Serving customer but mugging employees	4. Siphoning money through dummy companies and chit funds – this practice has been converted into art now, economic cell looks other side	3. Enrolling people rather than stream rolling– people find loopholes faster than new strategy is built for practices based on integrity, narratives and folklore developed connects cunning practices with wealth creation. Role of media with high integrity is tremendously felt in Indian context.
5. Using threat of job loss to overload employees, cut income or incentives and increase working hours	5. Cyber hacking of the company data bases – selling vital client information for profit, ransomware or intentional spreading of virus, hacking financial accounts	
6. Unethical governance structure – created to achieve political end rather than enhancing stakeholder interest – broker selling/buying client shares multiple times for brokerage losing money for client in turn.		
7. Lack of integrity and security – cover up campaign by malingering whistle blower or sane voices		
8. Trade without mutual benefit – exploitative trade practices, cartels to create entry barriers for new entrants		

There is a dilemma between being compassionate and running a business for profit (you are appointed to serve the later). Downsizing, salary cut, freeze on promotions and increment, withholding benefits, removed holidays and increased working hours are ready made and easy solutions to be cost competitive in pandemic times. Narratives declare silent acceptance of such dictates as a sign of loyalty and professionalism understanding business realities.

Instead of a culture of repression, self-discipline and positive cultural intervention can set right role models and examples in society. Recognizing right practices in public life, giving people positive reinforcement can encourage right practices. Over glorification of crime and criminals should be curbed. Enrolling people rather than stream rolling can be key to success. Film industry in India, for example, has always been in the news for being funded by the underworld. To quote Times of India verbatim (September 7, 2011) "According to Jehil Thakkar, Head of media and entertainment for (KPMG), this association stemmed from the financing needs of the industry; until 2000, by government fiat, the industry was ineligible for bank credit, private equity, and other legitimate commercial financing." As a result, films were financed by ad hoc collections of investors, many of whom were from the construction and trade industries, who charged interest rates as high as 60-100%. The industry also welcomed funds from gangsters and politicians, looking for ways to launder their ill-gotten gains, known in India as "black money", said the cable issued by the US Consulate in Mumbai, released by WikiLeaks. Recently, there is upheaval in Bollywood for many issues which should be objectively investigated, with positive intention to clean up dirt, as this industry creates a perception and value pan India which new generation (young impressionable mind) takes pleasure to immolate.

***5. Science without humanity – (Concept - Becoming victim of own technology, huge dependence on technology to run life, isolating from human values and contact)***

Science is a double-edged sword; it can be a good servant to humanity and help us make our life comfortable. On the contrary, it can be a bad master and cannot only subjugate, but make us dependent on it and can bring devastating changes in life. With advancement of technology we have moved to a different world and every day the pattern of living is changing making pressure on everyone to adjust to new realities. But off lately, we have distanced from humanity and there is increased dependence on technology. Social fabric has gone for dramatic changes. It has created weapons of mass destruction capable of finishing the entire world many times.

If a car breaks down then you can take it to mechanic and he can rectify the error, but if it is frequently breaking down then we need to look for the root cause. Chance is there might be an inexperienced driver, a drunken old man, or a teenager on drug behind the wheel causing such problem. A weapon in the hands of terrorists can be lethal to kill innocents. Science devoid of humanity can be misused and can be detrimental to peace and harmony.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Social media addiction over mobile and other devices – life has started moving from screen to screen, eating major chunk of our waking life – phone, computer, tablet and TV.	1. Accumulation and use of biological – chemical weapon or weapon of mass destruction – threat perception leads to piling up weapons, many countries thrive on selling such weapons and they show its devastation as USP – unique selling points	Gun don't kill people, people kill people
2. Use of technology to steal personal data and accounts – smart technologies are evasive, capable of extracting intimate and personal details of innocent victims	2. Use of social media to misguide workers for mass assembly breaking social distancing norms – in pandemic spreading rumours and mass mobilizing people in no time was misused many times by unscrupulous elements	1. Creating social order to meaningful life – In Achieving Society McClelland mentions about the content fed to generation leads to motivation in a direction. We need to analyse what educational curriculum, available literature, mass media, movies, TV serials and social media is feeding to generation in India

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
3. Gruesome weapons of destruction– biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons of mass destruction, magnitude of destruction can be unimaginable.	3.Mobile games encouraging suicide and other violent malpractices - even the games are not safe, Blue Whale -encouraging suicide, GTA -encourages sexual outrages	2. Technology as an enabler of life, rather than driver of life – when technology becomes a driver of life, they can be bad masters. We as a nation needs to focus on technology to sustain life, by judiciously blending all aspects of life, rather than escaping responsibility by putting it on the next generation's choice. Policy makers have a critical role to be vigilant and inclusive in their approach
4. Cybercrimes and hacking – embezzlement, information tracking, account hacking, cyber bullying and conning are rising	4.Environmental degradation by some highly polluting industries – greenhouse effect, rising temperature and receding glacier lines are threatening	
5. Environmental degradation by polluting industries – the debate question is how much pollution we are ready to sustain as the cost of technological progress.		

With the signs of war looming at the border and in the international water, we are more exposed towards the destructive side of science. A small mistake can prove lethal to humanity, capable of pushing us back more than 50 years.

Creating social-political order to meaningful life, respect of territorial integrity and transparency in international relations are critical. We manage such violent tensions at micro level (state, district, city, village level) with less impact. If any such flare up happens at macro level, everything can be ruined in no time. Solutions to such situations lie in harmonizing international relations accommodating aspirations of smaller countries who cannot fight alone and keeping world opinion in favour.

Technology on the other hand can be used as an enabler of life. The progress in medical science and resultant life expectancy across the globe is one example. Technology in communications, transportation, automation, manufacturing,

banking sector, agriculture, constructions, and infrastructure development sector have really revolutionized our life. We need progressive leadership in every field to bring the human face of technology to enable progressive and happier life.

***6. Religious without sacrifice – (Concept – Active in church, inactive in its gospel – religion leaders who mobilize people through their preaching should follow the original principles it advocates)***

“Religion is the clearest telescope through which we can behold the beauties of creation” (William Scott Downey). Most of the religion evolved in organized society to give direction to the human race for a better insight into being, evolve noble cause of existence and practice human values. Like politics, even religion is losing its glory, and being associated with extreme views and negative connotations. There are few interested individuals and wrongdoers who with their massive presence in the social and political arena have spread hard-line philosophy of their own interpretation. Quoting Steven Weinberg, “With or without religion, you would have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, that takes religion.” Such perceptions are results of massive breach of trust of people by those who practice religion without sacrifice.

We stop at preaching and practice is left to more vulnerable and idealists. Ideal of sacrifice doesn't suit many business and economic/political concerns these days. When preaching and practice are at dissonance, it creates a culture of greed and insolvency. Violators are caught saving their hides and doing lip service. Voices are tactfully silenced, and a narrative built to support apathy. Fixing blames on others makes our own guilt bearable. This is a very sensitive issue, vested interest subject it to their own interpretation to suit their personal interest.

Tolerance and respect for diversity should be inculcated in a child right from childhood, because once an opinion is formed it is difficult to remove it. Academic institutions should be reformed to encourage and celebrate diversity. School curriculum should have mandatory rather than optional credit for social work from school days to teach the value of service to children. But such practices should also be extended in professional life but making it mandatory to extend

compulsory services to needy people. Medical Doctors are already serving rural areas, in line with that social work should be integrated in educational curricula, military/NCC/Scout-Guide training to be made a compulsory part of education. Every profession should have some mandatory work dedicated to community.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. Religion reduced to meaningless rituals – there have always been fights between virtues and vices, and there has been revival of religions in a new form eradicating dirt it accumulates. For long, there is not much changes in a philosophical stand on religion. Long apathy has once again mystified religion which is mainly used as social and political weapon to enrage and misguide people.	1. Religious persecution of a community – There have been religious institutions who allowed gatherings despite lockdown in violation of government guidelines and have set a wrong example for people at large.	It takes sacrifice to serve the needs of other people  1. Practice of having social work from school days – a practice to instil social responsibility from childhood and encourage right responsible citizenship behaviour among children. Form Of basic military training should also be encouraged to build national pride and responsible behaviour.



<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
<p>2. In name of religion people have spawned more hate and violence than any government – India has seen many Hindu-Muslim violent riots, hate speeches and inflammatory allegations.</p>	<p>2. Instigating riot through inflammatory speech – Many political issues have been turned into religious issues by interested parties, leading to unrest and bad blood among religious groups. Protest against CAA-NRC-NPR ended after 101 days on March 24 at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi after police were forced to vacate due to pandemic scare. Stone pelting and violence on road, police brutality and ugly turn of peaceful protest raised issues muddled with religious and political fervours.</p>	<p>2. Mandatory services by professionals to serve (Doctors in rural areas, Punjabi Langer) – Almost every profession can find a way to serve those who cannot afford and where access to mainstream facilities are minimum. Sense of serving should replace killing for living attitude</p>

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
<p>3. Shameless propaganda about our virtues without translating it into practice (Media management) – Many religious and spiritual leaders have lost their public images by sexual misconducts and crimes of murder. In light of their present character, their speeches in retrospect look phoney, creating disillusionment among followers' huge number who dedicated their life to them.</p>		

***7. Politics without principle – (Concept – Politics driven by greed, power, opportunism, and crony capitalism – act of passive violence)***

Politics by Aristotle (translated by Benjamin Jowett, 1999) – “Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.” However, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. When politics side-lines or ignores principles with their blatant use of power, falsification and façade, degeneration starts setting up in the system. Abraham Lincoln rightly mentions that “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if they want to test a man’s character, give them power”.

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Contemporary Crisis and Violence</b>	<b>Need for peace Intervention</b>
1. No principles – just opportunism	1. Brutality on labour during exodus after lockdown	Get social will, value system aligned with correct principles.  1. Rationalizing VIP culture –streamlining perks and authority, bringing accountability and responsibility with authority
2. Politician spending million dollars for image building	2. Political squabbling over Sino-India face off	2. Encouraging educated group to join politics
3. Horse trading to form government	3. Politics to divide state, caste, and community	3. Public censor of criminal practices / treason / scams / open loot
4. Intrigues to displace rightful heir/ owner deceitfully	4. Politics to support criminal activities and criminals	
5. Politics of vengeance, sabotage, fear psychosis	5. Politics to suppress data of corruption	
6. “Passive violence – which fuels the active violence of crime, rebellion, and war	6. Politics of vengeance to settle scores	
7. An unjust law is itself a species of violence	7. Politics for pure power and hegemony	

Politics can be at the micro and macro level of the system, and does not denote just political parties. Economic concerns of the majority have always sacrificed principles creating dreadful work culture.

VIP culture and lifestyle has isolated many leaders from their duties. Lavish and luxurious lifestyle and uninhibited power has intoxicated many political and


corporate leaders. We need to rationalize VIP culture by streamlining perks and authority, bringing accountability and responsibility with authority. It is important that leaders should be coming from a broader perspective and not the feudal mind-set. Encouraging educated group to join politics and severing the nexus of criminals and politicians are important steps. Political system can be made more transparent by automatizing and digitalizing process and making political transactions transparent subject to public scrutiny. Public censor of criminal practices / treason / scams / open loot needs active citizen group keeping an alert vigil. Current political scenario substantiates quotes of Mark Twain – *“Politicians and diapers must be changed often, and for the same reasons.”*

Principle-centred leadership is the key to eradicate this social evil. Gandhiji himself struggled to overcome so many temptations in his life as mentioned in his book “My experiment with truth”. Like him, those who tried to be in politics with sound principles, became legends in their lifetime.

Seven social sins as mentioned by Gandhiji can be the root of social and political evils. It has potential to create unrest. We need to look at both short term and long term solutions to social evils. Contemporary India is waiting for veterans like Vivekanand, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar and Dayanand Saraswati to bring the next generation social revolution hammering all the social evils once again and bringing a new order for more symbiotic and harmonious life.

Onus lies on every citizen.





# The Pandemic: Challenges and an Opportunity to Revisit the Gandhian Perspective

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## **Abstract:**

Humanity across the world today faces unprecedented uncertain times due to spread of Covid-19, which has disrupted every possible human activity. What began as a health crisis has soon turned into a devastating disrupter for trade and commerce wiping away millions of jobs due to varying degrees of lockdowns, which were announced in an attempt to control the spread of the virus. With the passage of time the trade-off between saving lives and saving livelihoods has grown starker. As governments struggle to balance between lockdowns and unlocking in their various versions, desperately waiting for an effective vaccine on one hand, and working out various combinations of fiscal and monetary packages for revival and recovery of the economy on the other, there can be no doubt that Covid-19 could be a milestone in at least the recent history of human civilisation. It has significantly transformed our consumption patterns, the pace of production, the channels of merchandise and the ways of living in general. Isolation of China, which had emerged as a central link to the global supply chain and leap into Industry 4.0, has pushed back the momentum of globalisation if not stalled it, and nationalism has grown as a popular sentiment. This onslaught of circumstances calls for an alternative way of managing human affairs and revisiting Gandhi and his thoughts might provide some valuable insights into how we might want to turn the page.

This paper attempts to relate the present crisis to the Gandhian way of thinking to arrive at some concrete take-homes. As a man of the masses, Gandhi worked out solutions by first letting them germinate in the ground. And this would be usually preceded by deep introspection and meditative ruminations by Gandhi himself. All his calls for the peoples' movements towards nation building and seeking political independence were first tested by him on the core values of truth, non-violence and non-covetousness, which he held very dearly. An attempt is being made here to retain that spirit of holding people at large as change-makers, of course without losing sight of the role of the government as a policy maker and provider of relief during the stressful times.

Section I provides a brief overview of the extent of crisis caused by the pandemic, globally and in India. The exodus of migrants followed by the stringent lockdowns and the untold hardships faced by them in the process bring out the neglected maladies of the India's growth story, which is covered in section II. This includes the lop-sided regional development, failure to ensure decent living and working environment to millions of workers, which speaks of reeking inequality, all of which are antithetical to the basic tenets of Gandhian economics. Section III explores into why this may be the right time to tweak the way we perceive economics giving it a Gandhian bend along with an enunciation of foundations of Gandhian economics. The paper concludes by pointing out how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in fact speak the Gandhian message in a new style. In other words, if the SDGs represent the collective dream of the humanity, a sincere relook towards Gandhian thought becomes an imperative.

**Key Words: Discretionary consumption, slow-down, unemployment, MNRGS, Cooperatives, Decent work, Austerity, SDGs, Covid Allowance**

## **Introduction:**

Covid19 has pushed the world into a pervasive crisis encompassing every aspect of human life. It has altered our consumption pattern, shocked our smart production systems, changed the modes of education and entertainment and has made

us take a serious relook at the 'social animal' definition of ourselves as a race that has increasingly learnt to dominate this planet. Arguably, the most fearsome feature of this pandemic is its uncertainty: from the symptoms and their absence, to the possibility of its return with a vengeance, and the serious after-effects on the 'recovered' cases in terms of possible long term damages it can cause to the vital organs of the patients, requiring persistent medical testing and appropriate interventions long after the infection has subsided. As every prediction about the 'flattening' of the curve and an end to the desperate search for a reliable and an affordable vaccine seems eluding us, it is time to introspect about the wrongs we have committed as 'civilised' inhabitants of earth which makes our ways of living so precarious, inequitable and unsustainable today. Beginning with containment of wants, Gandhian economics, grounded on the premises of non-violence, truth, and non-covetousness, is instantly antithetical to the mainstream economics. Dignity of labour, self-sufficient and strong village economy and the principle of trusteeship emerge as logical corollaries of this system of thought with an inbuilt thread of morality running through it to offer an integrated view of managing economy polity and society harmoniously. Gandhian thought can provide some critical insights during this exercise in introspection. This paper is an attempt in this direction.

## **Section I: An Overview of the Covid Crisis**

The year 2019 ended with a few cases of infection of Covid-19, first in China, which soon gripped all the nations across the world in an unprecedented manner disrupting every possible human activity. Within months it took the form of the worst feared pandemic in the recent human history with the only known way to restrict its spread being lockdown social distancing along with scrupulous standards of cleanliness and hygiene. This in turn wiped away millions of jobs across the world, severely affecting global supply chains, and totally freezing certain sectors such as aviation and hospitality. Forced unemployment meant loss of income for many, and hence a severely constrained demand. With the two market forces losing their steam, there were predictions of a dip in global production, which have been revised downwards within a few months. Globally, a loss of nearly 400 million full-time jobs has been estimated in the year's second



quarter (April-June 2020) according ILO. An IMF estimate projected loss of 9 trillion dollars to the global economy and a dip of 3% in the global economic growth rate in the year 2020.

In India unemployment reached a record level of 27.1% by the end of April 2020. According to a CMIE report about 122 million workers lost their jobs by April end, of which nearly 70% were small traders and wage labourers. And though resumption of agricultural operations with the onset of monsoon helped in reducing unemployment in the following months, reports suggest a likely resurgence in unemployment once this peak activity in agriculture is over. This is borne out by the fact that just in the month of June, 62 million people demanded work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) programme at minimum wages. Macro-economic Indicators reveal the bruises suffered by the economy. To take a snap shot, during the April-June quarter, India's GDP contracted by 23.9%. It is estimated that there could be a permanent loss of 13% of real GDP over the medium term and to catch-up with the pre-pandemic trend value of real GDP would require average real GDP growth to surge to 13% annually for the next three fiscals.

A sector-wise growth in GVA (Gross Value Added) presented in the monetary policy report of RBI (October 2020) provides a brief view of the economy.

TableI: Sector-wise Growth in GVA

Sector	2018-19 (FRE)	2019-20 (PE)	2020-21
			Q1
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.4	4.0	3.4
Industry	4.5	0.8	-33.8
Mining and quarrying	-5.8	3.1	-23.3
Manufacturing	5.7	0.0	-39.3
Electricity, gas, water supply and other utilities	8.2	4.1	-7.0
Services	7.5	5.0	-24.3
Construction	6.1	1.3	-50.3
Trade, hotels, transport, communication	7.7	3.6	-47.0
Financial, real estate and professional services	6.8	4.6	-5.3
Public administration, defence and other services	9.4	10.0	-10.3
GVA at Basic Prices	6.0	3.9	-22.8
FRE: First Revised Estimates; PE: Provisional Estimates. Source: NSO.			

Barring agriculture, forestry and fishing, every other sector has had a negative growth in GVA. Unsurprisingly, as noted in RBI report, both the customer confidence and the business sentiments have also been on the decline<sup>1</sup>. When the two components of private expenditure slide down the gloom spreads from the real sector to the monetary sector and banks have to struggle with NPAs (Non-Performing Assets) on the one hand and poor demand for borrowings on the other, thus arresting the future economic growth.

What is further worrisome is the fact that the states which have a major share in India's GDP (~36%), Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, together accounted for ~54% of India's total confirmed cases as on September 7.

While all these numbers are enough to indicate the overall gloom that looms over the economy, one of the worst fallout of the pandemic was the flood of 'reverse migration' of workers back to their home states, by every possible mode of transportation including walking painfully for long distances across the subcontinent. Some have even compared it to the turmoil around partition time. Even if this is seen as an exaggeration, it cannot be denied that it has been a human tragedy of a colossal proportion, and that it does represent an indecent side of the India's growth story.

## **Section II: India's Growth Story:**

It is well-known that the growth rate of the Indian economy crawled up to 3.5% in the first three decades of planning which have been boldly described as the decades of State control. A few notable achievements during this period were: a. setting up of major irrigation projects, b. setting up of IITs, c. the Green Revolution and near self-sufficiency in food production, d. the white revolution (Production of milk) and e. bank nationalisation, expansion of banks and rise in the saving rate. The eighties began with some window of opening up and India went in for the liberalisation privatisation and globalisation (LPG) through her New Economic

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1 <https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/PublicationsView.aspx?id=19439> Accessed on 25/11/2019

Policy which ushered in a new era of a phenomenal expansion of opportunities along with of rising aspirations of her people.

Table 2: India's decadal GDP growth and investment rates Year

Source: Basu, Kaushik 2018

	Annual GDP growth rate	Investment rate	Savings rate
1951-61	3.91	11.82	-
1961-71	3.68	14.71	9.03
1971-81	3.09	17.86	12.96
1981-91	5.38	21.04	17.32
1991-2001	5.71	24.14	24.27
2001-11	7.68	32.44	31.42
2011-18	6.61	35.78	31.17

The table speaks well of the impressive economic growth achieved by India with both savings and investment rising hand in hand especially after opening up of the economy, which also did well to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and to accumulate the foreign exchange reserves, as is visible in the following table.

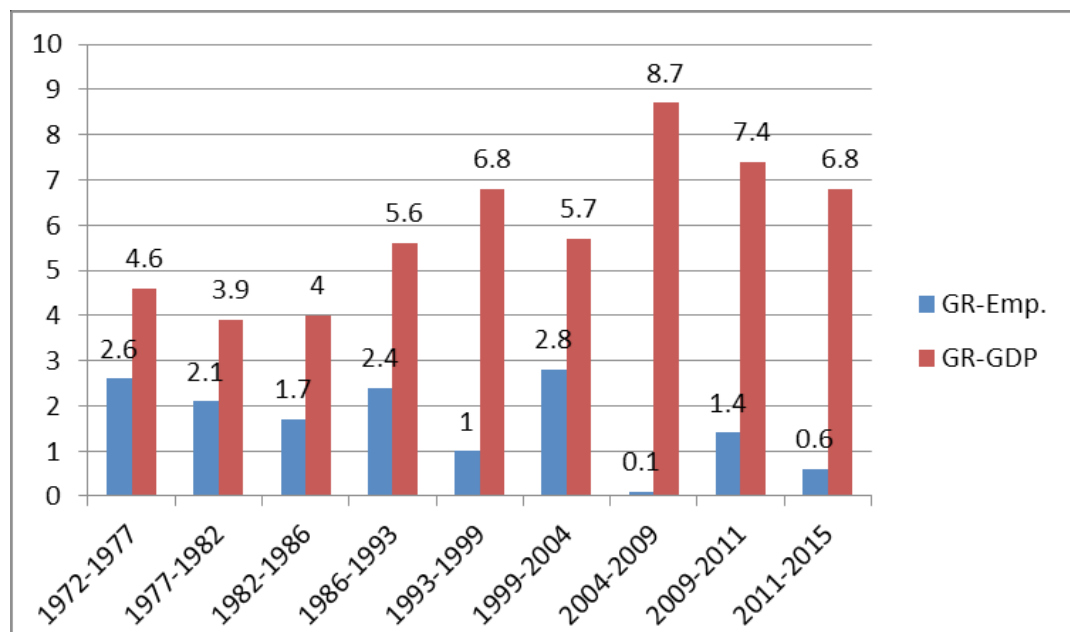
Table 3: Growth in FDI & foreign exchange reserves

Source: Basu, Kaushik 2018

India's foreign exchange reserves		Total reserves
Year	₹ billion	US\$ million
1954-55	9	1,873
1959-60	4	762
1964-65	3	524
1969-70	8	1,094
1974-75	10	1,379
1979-80	59	7,361
1984-85	72	5,952
1989-90	63	3,962
1994-95	798	25,186
1999-00	1,659	38,036
2004-05	6,191	141,514
2009-10	12,597	279,057
2014-15	21,376	341,638
2017-18	27,930	405,810

There was also a significant reduction in extreme poverty, and the fact that India could maintain her annual growth rate between 8 to 9% even during the years of global financial crisis, gave rise to the hope that India was about to emerge as an economic power in the world, especially with the so called demographic dividend in her favour.

However, this glorious growth story is not without its shadow. And there are several indicators of this. Malnutrition and high mortality among children<sup>2</sup>, high rates of dropouts from school<sup>3</sup> despite high enrolment<sup>4</sup>, growing gap in the rate of growth of profit vis a vis wages over the years, are only some of them. The graph below shows how India's growth has increasingly failed to create jobs



Graph: India's Jobless Growth

Source: Reports from Ministry of Labour and Employment, and Economic Surveys

Sluggish job creation means greater dependence on agriculture. More than 50% of India's population is dependent on agriculture, but the share of agriculture in

2 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/68-of-under-5-deaths-in-india-due-to-child-maternal-malnutrition/article31570050.ece> Accessed on 25/11/2019

3 <https://news.careers360.com/dropout-rates-increasing-in-classes-9-and-10-in-some-states-mhrd> Accessed on 25/11/2019

4 [https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/ESAG-2018.pdf](https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/ESAG-2018.pdf) Accessed on 25/11/2019

the GDP has been falling consistently. This means that nearly half of the people are trapped in low productivity and poor growth while the other half lives the story of prosperity and growth. This may be a broad representative of the urban-rural divide, but the divide within the rural sector itself becomes clear when we account for the iniquitous ownership of agricultural land. In that less than 5% of farmers control 32% of India's farmland and a "large" farmer has 45 times more land than the "marginal" farmer. Finally, 101.4 million people, or 56.4% of rural households own no agricultural land. This poverty and poor productivity in agriculture and the seasonality of employment explains migration, which is roughly estimated to be 10% of the population. According to the report of the Working Group on Migration (2017) only 17 districts from UP and Bihar together account for 25% of the total male out migrants in the country. Whether one understands it as a push or a pull factor, migration of this scale most certainly underlines the regional disparities and hence the pockets of abject poverty. Further, the growth that has increasingly added fewer and fewer jobs hints at the urban poverty and the fate of the migrants, who might still choose urban poverty in hope of more opportunities of earning a livelihood than the rural counterpart. Living in highly congested slums and surviving on poor wages with little safety at workplace largely under informally agreed terms of employment, or running a small commercial unit employing family labour, the migrant workers have been the hidden army providing support services to every sector and across the classes.

And when the lockdown was extended to ensure that people Stay Home and Stay Safe, people living in these Dickensian condition decided to flee because firstly their savings had dried up, and their congested dwellings with common toilets were hardly 'Safe Homes'! And this was a saga of massive hardships for millions who only knew they had to leave where they had survived so far but did not know how to reach where they wanted to, and whether they would live to see that destination.

### **Section III: Why Gandhian Thought? And Why Now**

The market economy needs the fuel of bullish expectations. But profits rise when the market size expands and the market size depends on income distribution and

employment generation. Economists across ideologies have pointed out time and again that rise in unemployment would stunt the market size and hence the profit. Labour may be a factor of production, but as a consumer, the labourer should also be the 'King' of the market system; and here lies the crux of the dialectics of the growth process in a market economy. In other words, it may be possible to gather more profit by squeezing wages, but only in the short run. In the long run the same strategy will in fact usher in stagnation. Similarly regional disparities, iniquitous distribution of income and assets are equally loud announcers of unsustainability. Again, when only 7% of the workforce is engaged in organised sector with decent working conditions including right to organise unions, and 93% workers largely remain outside the ambit of security, growth would remain unaccompanied by development, and hence may prove unsustainable. To sustain the fruits of high growth achieved through market friendly economic policies we may need to ensure that more hands earn income, and decent income at that, to keep the demand burning.

This brings us to the Gandhian system of thought, which begins at a position that is totally antithetical to the mainstream economics. The textbook economics, aka positive economics, starts with the premise that wants in general are insatiable, and that the resources are limited. Gandhian system, steeped in normative thinking<sup>5</sup>, starts with the idea of containment of wants, because after all there is enough on this earth for everybody's needs but not enough for one man's greed. Greed breeds violence and gives rise to the need to exploit others, which is against the first primal principle of Gandhian system: non-violence. Squeezing wages and exploiting workers is also equivalent to violence. Unequal land holding is manifestation of greed, which was sought to be corrected through Bhoodaan movement by Gandhiji's illustrious disciple, Vinoba Bhave. Creating circumstances that force people to migrate because of poverty might amount to violence at a societal level. Gandhiji wanted to reverse this by making village communities stronger and self-sufficient. Empowering villages through a benevolent Jajmani system was his idea of nurturing the roots of India that lived mostly in villages. Well-being of rural India was of utmost importance to him and people who migrated after that had been achieved, would be exercising their choice.

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5 <https://www.mkgandhi.org/momgandhi/chap41.htm> Accessed on 25/11/2019

Gandhiji's ideas about choice of technology have been much debated, but the key idea of optimally using the local resources and skill are the basic tenets of any text book trade theory. Machines are useful. But they should not impact the dignity of labour. Gandhiji's concept of dignity of labour has several dimensions<sup>6</sup>: Firstly, it means that no labour is menial. In fact he strongly recommended a few hours of manual labour every day. That would ensure physical and mental fitness besides sensitising the employers of manual workers appropriately. Dignity of labour also means more importance to the man behind the machine. It means the need to treat that man with decency. Decency would include healthy and clean working conditions and reasonable wages. His intervention in the Ahmedabad textile workers' strike can be seen as an attempt to ensure decent work. He was not against industries. Industries would be necessary for progress, and they would have to make profit in order to survive, but again the profits belong to the society, that provided every possible resource to an industrialist, who is therefore a mere trustee of this wealth. It becomes his obligation to look after the needs of the society. Using profit towards larger social good, which is the crux of Corporate Social Responsibility, can thus be traced back to Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship.

Although his ideas never fail to appeal to higher consciousness, it is customary to applaud them as legends that can only be admired from a distance<sup>7</sup>. It is also an easier way to escape the responsibility of implementing them or even experimenting with them.

However, the current pandemic has paved way to possibility of such experimentation, and there are several grounds to justify this position.

**Changing Consumption pattern:** The pattern of consumption has changed significantly especially during the lockdown periods. Studies have noted a substantial reduction in 'discretionary' (read as conspicuous) consumption. Consumers are less blinded by the 'brand-value' and are increasingly alert

6 <http://gandhiashramsevagram.org/voice-of-truth/gandhiji-on-dignity-of-labour-bread-labour.php> Accessed on 25/11/2019

7 <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/uks-labour-party-group-mahatma-gandhi-future-leaders-plan-6556198/> Accessed on 25/11/2019

about distinguishing between essential and non-essential consumption, even while choosing a brand<sup>8</sup>. This is a form of ‘containment of wants’, though forced by circumstances. Nudging households to choose healthy lifestyle to bolster immunity in the face of Covid is another blessing in disguise. Preferences are shifting to natural and herbal remedies and learning about their goodness and lasting effects. Ceremonies have become Spartan since huge gatherings are dangerous. More time at home is a ‘Razor’s Edge kind of a situation. On the one hand there are studies of higher incidence of substance abuse, alcoholism anxiety and depression<sup>9</sup> and on the other innovative and creative ways are being devised to make home-stay more bearable. These include online learning programs from those aiming at honing untapped skills to the ones on self-healing, and discovering inner peace. It is true that the deaths and morbidity associated with the pandemic along with the financial stress and being largely home bound has led to more cases suffering from depression and anxiety, but it is also true that more and more people in our society are willing to acknowledge these cases as ‘normal’, and are willing to reach out to provide assistance at least through social media.

Indeed the Subjective Well Being (SWB) can swing in either direction, as brought out by an exhaustive study based on a cross sectional survey of over 1000 participants in China<sup>10</sup>, and how we tweak the support systems towards choosing a healthier life style now can have a critical impact for the times to come.

**Changing Patterns of Production:** As the world grapples with the problem of fragmentation of the supply chain, the necessity to restart in whatever manner

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8 For a detailed survey of changing consumption pattern, see: How the coronavirus is changing consumption patterns (livemint.com) Accessed on 25/11/2019

9 The next pandemic: COVID-19 mental health pandemic Evelyn Parrish: The next pandemic: COVID-19 mental health pandemic - PubMed (nih.gov), The assessment of lifestyle changes during the COVID-19 pandemic using a multidimensional scale (nih.gov), Effects of COVID-19 Home Confinement on Eating Behaviour and Physical Activity: Results of the ECLB-COVID19 International Online Survey - PubMed (nih.gov) Accessed on 25/11/2019

10 Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic on Lifestyle Behaviors and Their Association With Subjective Well-Being Among the General Population in Mainland China: Cross-Sectional Study Zhao Hu1, MD ; Xuhui Lin1, MD ; Atipatsa Chiwanda Kaminga2,3, MD ; Huilan Xu1, PhD See: JMIR - Impact of the COVID-19 Epidemic on Lifestyle Behaviors and Their Association With Subjective Well-Being Among the General Population in Mainland China: Cross-Sectional Study | Hu | Journal of Medical Internet Research Accessed on 25/11/2019



possible, producers may be forced to relocate their sources of supply. An UNCTAD economist, P. Fortunato, in his study on How COVID-19 is Changing Global Value Chains (September 2, 2020), observes a trend towards relocation of the GVC (Global Value Chain) in favour of a greater use of local skills and materials. Compelled by the pressures of circumstance we might redevelop production systems of the kind that Gandhiji advocated strongly to promote self-sufficiency.

Further, experts highlight compulsions to turn to green technology<sup>11</sup>. The Confederation of British Industry, for instance, has urged the government to invest in green technology and jobs<sup>12</sup>. In a significant move to ensure sustainability in post-Covid scenario, the UK government has even announced Green Recovery Challenge Fund<sup>13</sup>. Interestingly, investment in green technology can unleash a significant multiplier effect with a high employment potential as noted by ILO<sup>14</sup>.

**Empathy towards the deprived:** The migrants reaching their home states on foot, by legitimate or illegal means<sup>15</sup> has been a heart-wrenching story<sup>16</sup>. But it has also led to individuals and NGOs rising to the occasion to support of these unfortunate fellow beings through supply of food packets and other materials to ease their agony. The State Union governments did arrange Shramik trains to

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11 Clean, green and better: Policy priorities in a post-COVID-19 world | Climate Investment Funds Accessed on 25/11/2019

12 'Create green post-Covid recovery' urges UK industry body - Positive News - Positive News Accessed on 25/11/2019

13 Building back a green and resilient recovery - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) Accessed on 25/11/2019

14 Microsoft Word - Methodologies for assessing green jobs March 2013 (ilo.org). Also see: Looking-for-green-jobs\_the-impact-of-green-growth-on-employment.pdf (lse.ac.uk) Accessed on 24/11/2019

15 <https://www.thestatesman.com/coronavirus/18-migrant-workers-trying-to-reach-home-hiding-in-cement-mixer-held-in-madhya-pradesh-1502883244.html> Accessed on 20/09/2019

16 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india-migrants-spe/special-report-indias-migrant-workers-fall-through-cracks-in-coronavirus-lockdown-idUSKBN2230M3> Accessed on 20/09/2019

ensure safe return, but the role of individuals<sup>17</sup>, NGOs<sup>18</sup> and religious institutions<sup>19</sup> that extended a helping hand so spontaneously cannot be overemphasised. If the reverse migrant movement is akin to partition, so is the extent of support and help from various quarters of the society. Gandhiji would have not only appreciated this spirit of empathy but would have perhaps succeeded in processing into institution building to sustain it longer.

When the existing patterns of socio-economic systems are shaken, they create a space for a paradigm shift. It is also an opportune time to correct the previous malfunctions of the system. For example:

**Reducing Rural-Urban imbalance:** Greater dependence of our population on agriculture indicates non availability of non-agricultural jobs. Providing more jobs in the non-agricultural sector, and more so in manufacturing is a need of the hour<sup>20</sup>. Promoting agro-based and related commercial activities such as fisheries and food processing can go a long way in providing more opportunities of gainful employment in the rural sector, which would be a step in Gandhian direction: reducing circumstances that force people to choose migration as a last option to survive.

Domestic violence and the gender issue: It is a well recorded fact that there is an increase in violent, abusive, impulsive, compulsive, and controlling behavior and aggression directed towards women during the periods of economic hardships. Studies suggest an astonishing rise in the harassment of women behind closed doors. While everyone in the household may be living under a potential threat to life, financial stress, lack of opportunities to socialise, frequent violent outbursts among men desperate for alcohol or tobacco seem to be considered socially

17 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/sex-and-relationships/this-is-how-good-samaritans-are-helping-delhi-survive-in-lockdown/story-MPp9nxz34zCCBg1ELZACL.html> Accessed on 25/11/2019

18 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/good-samaritans-social-organisations-come-forward-to-help-those-hit-by-lockdown/articleshow/74901311.cms> Accessed on 25/11/2019

19 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/gurdwara-along-nh2-has-fed-over-a-million-people-during-lockdown/articleshow/76163085.cms>, and <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/punjab/dsgmc-launches-langar-on-wheels-for-migrants-86473> Accessed on 25/11/2019

20 See Reviving Jobs: An Agenda for Growth (ed) by Santosh Mehrotra (2020)

acceptable. Being trapped in a space with violent or manipulative individuals could lead to increased rates and intensity of threats, physical, sexual and psychological abuse, humiliation, intimidation, and controlling behavior, which is heightened by the lockdown. And this is true of developed countries as well<sup>21</sup>. In the first five weeks of lockdown, Pune police reported an increase in the cases of domestic violence by 12 times<sup>22</sup>. These numbers have justified the term 'parallel pandemic' to domestic violence, underlining the dark gender impact of the pandemic, but they have also brought out the issue of gender disparity and the disenfranchisement of women in a manner that can no longer be overlooked. That family, which ideally the basic nurturing cell in the society should exhibit its stark opposite during such hard times especially to the very agents that provide the nourishment, is a strong and shrill alarm the pandemic has played, which needs to be heard.

**Treatment to the Reverse Migrants:** States which have had a pressure for accommodating reverse migrants now have an opportunity to deploy their expertise at home. Many such States have reportedly undertaken skill-mapping, which had never been thought of before. These States can use this experienced labour force to work on improving infrastructure, building industrial estates, for setting up new MSMEs, etc. to attract more business. In fact the initial employment generation can take place through such investment, which can push up the economic growth through multiplier.

As for migrants with experience of running tiny or home-based businesses, it is possible to bring them together into clusters to form co-operatives. This is simply because migrants who have returned back are more likely to tune and team up with each other, and such trust would prove a strong foundation for

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21 The number of reported cases of domestic violence has risen in the first quarter of 2020 by 30% in France, by 100% in Singapore, 25% in Argentina and 33% in Cyprus. In China, one police station in Hubei province saw a tripling of domestic violence reports during the quarantine in February 2020.

22 According to the Crime in India Report 2018, published by the National Crime Research Bureau (NCRB), a crime is recorded against women in India every 1.7 minutes and a woman is subjected to domestic violence every 4.4 minutes. This might have only worsened during the pandemic.

a new enterprise especially in the form of co-operatives.<sup>23</sup> There are successful examples of migrant workers' co-operatives that emerged as a response to crisis in many countries. States can benefit by collaborating with ILO which has a rich experience of hand-holding many such projects across the globe<sup>24</sup>. Finally, co-operatives are important because they facilitate decentralisation of the process of growth, which is Gandhian in spirit.

**Urban Development:** Covid has emphasised the need for cleanliness and hygiene like never before. It has compelled the urban local bodies to improve and expand their health services. It is also a wake-up call to transform slums and the living conditions therein. Ignoring hygiene or treating it as welfare or a charitable act is not going to help because these are necessary for everyone's survival now. In a way ensuring decent living conditions, which is implicit in dignity of labour is thrust upon us as a need for survival. One thing the pandemic has taught us is that an infection anywhere is a threat to health everywhere.

**Decent Wages and The Covid Allowance:** States from where the migrant workers have moved out have had to raise wages due to severe shortage of labour. There are instances where workers have been given air tickets to return to work<sup>25</sup>! These may be anecdotal instances, but they do echo the need to treat workers with dignity though under duress. One only hopes that at least some such benefits last long enough to emerge as new practices. This should take us to Gandhiji's intervention in Ahmedabad textile strike to negotiate in the issue of plague allowance<sup>26</sup>. In my opinion there are several reasons that necessitate thinking of a Covid allowance and determining some standards to calculate it, and these are:

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23 See: <https://mfasia.org/migrant-workers-cooperatives-as-a-crisis-response/> for Indonesian experience of migrant workers co-opertives. Accessed on 14/05/2019

24 [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms\\_221743.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_221743.pdf) Accessed on 14/05/2019

25 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/3-times-more-pay-air-travel-how-migrants-are-being-woed-back/articleshow/76210270.cms>. And <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/construction-firms-migrant-workers-air-tickets-sops-623400> Accessed on 25/11/2019

26 <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/ahmedabad-textile-laborers-win-strike-economic-justice-1918>, <https://dialogueden.com/2020/blog/from-the-1918-influenza-pandemic-time-and-gandhis-role-as-an-arbitrator/> Accessed on 25/11/2019

1. The virus is very likely to stay longer than was initially feared. That makes it systemic and not temporary, and hence the need to institutionalise the support through designing a Covid allowance.
  
2. The lockdown inspired by the pandemic has led to what is being called as the New Normal of working from home. This mode saves the variable costs of his establishment such as power charges, use of computers, maintaining canteen facility, and overall housekeeping etc. for the employer, while the employees bear a higher cost in real and money terms. This is because: i. Employees might now work for longer hours, being available 24x7, ii. They have to face the stress of managing the work-space and home-space together, and iii. They might have to make an additional investment to upgrade infrastructure. It is important to compensate the employees for this.
  
3. Employees who travel to their workplaces during these times run a high risk of contracting the infection themselves if they resort to public transport. Opting for 'safer and more personalised travel to workplace, on the other hand is sure to hike their travel expenses.
  
4. It is now becoming clear, that those 'recovered' from Covid are indeed far from danger, as there are cases showing serious damages affecting vital organs of the patients even after recovery. The expenditure on testing and medicines is likely to rise unpredictably for those who contacted the infection even once.
  
5. Lastly of course the ability to pay of the employer would have to be taken into account, because harmony in employer employee relationship is crucial to Gandhian view of industrial relations.

**Environmental Concerns:** Lockdown reportedly reduced the air and water pollution substantially<sup>27</sup>. It would be up to us to maintain it with as much caution as

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27 <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200716101621.htm>, Accessed on 25/11/2019

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969720323378>, <https://www.timesnownews.com/mirror-now/in-focus/article/covid-19-lockdown-leading-to-significant-drop-in-ganga-river-water-pollution/574016> Accessed on 25/11/2019

possible. For instance there might be greater possibilities of shifting to more eco-friendly urban transport system and manufacturing systems to enable reduction in the carbon emissions along with creation of more employment opportunities.

## **Conclusion:**

Any attempt to engage in greater sustainability is Gandhian in spirit, because it can be achieved only by rising above the baser instincts of greed, violence and petty self-importance. In a truly Gandhian perspective the 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be seen as an integrated vision stemming from for a peaceful and harmonious coexistence of human beings with each other, with nature, and other beings supported by nature, which Gandhiji might have longed for. The crisis of the pandemic has opened up opportunities to tweak our ways of living on this planet in a wiser and more compassionate way. The choices we make now can have long term effects on our well-being.

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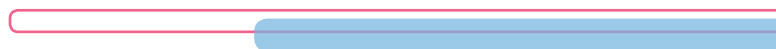
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# CONTRIBUTORS' BIONOTES



# Contributors

**Saurabh Chaturvedi:** holds a LL. B, LL. M and Doctorate in Law from CCS University, Meerut, India, and PGDHRM from Indira Gandhi National Open University, India. Before joining academia. Saurabh served Corporates including Reliance Industries, KJMC Merchant Bankers and Electra (India) Ltd. etc. for more than 9 years at various levels and deputed in various countries in South East Asia and Europe. In Legal Academics. Saurabh served National Law Universities at Jodhpur and Patna in India, Ethiopian Civil Services College, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) University of Iringa (Tanzania) and Queensland State University, Brisbane (Australia). Saurabh took many academic sessions with Southampton and Aberdeen Universities in UK and Ghent University in Belgium (West Europe). Saurabh has authored two books (Child Jurisprudence and International Trade law), published in international ISI /Scopus and ERA Indexed Journals, and attended various conferences/seminars organized by International bodies in France, Sweden and India. Saurabh supervises Ph. D scholars and guide LLM/M. Phil students opting for Cyber Law, Human Rights and Jurisprudence. Presently he is supervising one PhD scholar at Punjabi University, Patiala.

**Anita Patil Deshmukh:** USA trained faculty neonatologist by profession, self-taught social scientist by passion and developmental researcher by preference; Dr. Anita Patil-Deshmukh is the executive director of Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research (PUKAR). Anita received her Master's Degree in Public Health from Harvard and worked as a faculty Neonatologist in a teaching institute in Chicago over 25 years where she was the director of Ambulatory Pediatric Residency program for 9 years and Director of Continuous Medical Education (CME) department for 25 years. She played a major leadership role within India Development Service (IDS) a pioneering Chicago based organization supporting developmental projects in India. During her voluntary tenure of 15 long years in IDS, she visited 44 Integrated Rural Development Projects in 12 states of India and learnt about the developmental issues from grass root activists and practitioners. She relocated to India in 2005 to contribute to the developmental sector and joined PUKAR. Her research interests are

urban poverty, social determinants of health and urban knowledge production through the lens of marginalized youth. She has built successful collaborations with major global academic institutions like Harvard, Columbia, University of Chicago Berkeley, Max Plank Institute Germany to name a few. For her pioneering work with Barefoot Researchers in slums, she was awarded Innovator of the Year Award from Harvard School of Public Health in 2012 and an honorary PhD from Bradford University in 2019. Recently she was invited by UN Foundation to speak about digital divide as a part of her work with World Benchmark Alliance of which she is a member.

**Faraz Khan:** is a Concept Composer, Singer and Music Director, Raag Gandhi. He is a registered Ghazal Artist, cultural ministry, Government of Madhya Pradesh. He has been awarded a production designer at Reels Festival Los Angeles for Art Film Road to Sangam. He is also awarded by Government recognized Yayawar group Uttar Pradesh for work in the field of classical music. He does playback and background Music in Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's Rashmirathi poetic Mahabharat Light and Sound drama. He has composed Ghazals and Songs for 4 Live Albums.

**Suchita Krishnaprasad:** Having served as a faculty in the department of Economics, at Elphinstone College from 1984 to 2019 till she retired from the service, Suchita Krishnaprasad has also worked at S.P. Jain institute of Management, Mumbai for a brief period. Her areas of interest are labour and development economics and industrial relations. She is a life member of Indian Society of Labour Economics, and has presented and published several research papers at various annual national conferences held by the Society, besides a similar contribution in various international conferences. Papers written by her have been published in edited volumes dedicated to the themes like globalisation, and industrial relations. She is closely associated with Ambekar Institute of Labour Studies (AILS) and has consistently worked as a resource persons for the training programs jointly organized by AILS and FES to empower Trade Union leaders with ideas for strategies in future. Besides contributing as a chairperson for several University Grant Commission sponsored workshops, she has worked as a consultant and an external collaborator to two projects by International Labour Organization (ILO) in the past. Presently she is working on another project for ILO.

**Virendra Kumar:** joined the Department of Law in Panjab University as a Lecturer in 1967. In 1969 he proceeded for his doctoral

studies at the University of Toronto, Canada and was conferred the Degree of Juridical Sciences (SJD) in 1973. Dr Kumar joined as Professor of Law at Punjabi University Patiala in 1979 and later joined the parent Panjab University (PU) Chandigarh as Professor in 1981. Thereafter Dean, Faculty of Law from 1984-87, Chief Editor Panjab University Law Review (1982-85), Fellow (nominated), PU. In 1988, he was invited to be a member of the UGC Curriculum Development Centre in Law (11-member committee led by Professor Upendra Baxi, Delhi University, Delhi) which produced report of the Curriculum Development Centre in law (UGC, New Delhi, 1990) – a comprehensive report on legal education in India in order to promote excellence in teaching and research. He was awarded UGC Emeritus Fellow in Law (200-2004) and in 2004, he had the privilege of being invited to contribute an article on the Hindu Law: Overview, to The Oxford International Encyclopaedia of Legal History (Oxford University Press, USA) published in multi-volumes in 2009. He has been invited to address the International conferences, delivered special lectures under the aegis of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) at PU, Chandigarh since the year 2002, and he has to his credit 85 published papers. He is a resource person and nominated member of various law universities and institutes in the country and has been contributing (by invitation) his Critique of Judicial decisions of the High Courts and the Supreme Court mostly in the arena of Election Law since the year 1984; his critique is published every year in Annual Survey of Indian Law. He is founding Director (Academics) Chandigarh Judicial Academy (2009-12) – an institution for training judges of subordinate judiciary for training judges of subordinate judiciary the states of Punjab and Haryana, the Union Territory of Chandigarh; and member of the Three-member committee constituted by the Chief Justice of India under the Chairmanship of Justice KTS Thomas, Former Judge Supreme Court of India, for examining the functioning of the National Law School University, Bangalore (2008-2009).

**Sandhya Mehta:** is an Independent researcher and a social media co-ordinator of Mani Bhavan. Gandhi Sangrahalaya Mumbai. Her publications include Gandhiji views on Religious conversion and Gandhi in Bombay: Towards Swaraj, co-authored with Dr Usha Thakkar. She holds a degree in history from the University of Delhi.

**Ravi Narayanan:** holds a postgraduate degree in Social Psychology from Mumbai University. Ravi is Deputy General Manager, Sales Planning at Tata Motors and has been with the company for the

past 22 years. With a flair for poetry in four languages, in 2016, along with Shital, he published a tri-lingual book which is a compilation of their poems titled 'Do Kavityein'. He is also passionate about music being a percussionist himself. He finds it most fulfilling working with children in workshops. When he is not doing anything, he either listens to music or cooks for his family & friends. Knowing it is time to give back to the society, Ravi co-founded Saaraakassh Trust in 2015 with Shital. [www.saaraakassh.net](http://www.saaraakassh.net)

**Fauziya Patel:** is a Lecturer, in Department of Economics, Shankar Narayan College of Arts, Commerce & Professional Courses, Bhayandar, Thane. She is also a Visiting Faculty at variety of other institutions. She is a writer (Ghazals & Poems) in Urdu and Hindi. She is pursuing her Ph.D. in International Trade, University of Mumbai.

**Aparna Phadke:** is assistant professor in the Department of Geography, University of Mumbai. She has been engaged closely in innovative methods of learning to Jilla Parishad School children. She is also engaged in wetland protection movement in the capacity of expert. Currently she is working on a research project sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, IMPRESS on 'Urban Liveability'. Her research work has been published in peer reviewed national and international journals. She has also participated in national and international conferences.

**Akhouri Baibhav Prasad:** Baibhav has a blend of academic and corporate career spanning over two decades (23 years +). Baibhav is postgraduate in Psychology from University of Allahabad and M.Phil from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay. He has spent more than decade in corporate world (12 years+) – currently at Larsen and Toubro (L&T HCI IC) 4 years (April 2016 till date) as Head Leadership development and OD, Talent Development in Chennai, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) 3 years (2013–2016) and Wipro Limited 5 years 2 months (2008–2013) – successfully achieving business targets in Leadership, strategic, Behavioural, Cultural and Organizational Development (OD) initiatives, change management , coaching and mentoring. He also have been professionally certified by leading learning partners and have conducted various leadership and behavioral programmes successfully. He is also certified in various Psychometric instruments like Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst (CPBA) – DISC, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), FIRO EB, Personality and Preference Inventory (PAPI), Harrison Assessment

Basic Accreditation. He has received number of Awards Leadership Development Process, Best HR Initiatives.

**Niharika Ravi** is a 2nd year student of the BALLB (hons) course at NMIMS, Navi Mumbai. She is a dog lover, an aspiring writer and a passionate student of Bharatanatyam. Niharika has invested in learning about history, international polity, feminist ideas and environmental issues. She is always on the hunt for the next opportunity to write more about these, but meanwhile, she is often found reading a tome in the campus library.

**Shital Ravi:** Co-Founder of Disha Counselling Center, holds a postgraduate degree in Counselling Psychology from Mumbai University. She has also completed a certificate course in peace studies from Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center (MGPC), University of Mumbai. In the last 22 years of her counselling practice, she has worked extensively with children, adolescents and adults. A seasoned classical danseuse, Shital holds a 'Nritya Alamkar' in Bharatanatyam from the Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. She has won National titles like 'Singar Mani' and 'Natyamayuri', is a graded artiste of the Doordarshan, and the recipient of the prestigious "Central Government Scholarship" awarded by the Department of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of India. A prolific writer, Shital has featured as a weekly columnist in the leading daily, Daily News Analysis (DNA) and as a fortnightly columnist in Yuva Sakal, supplement of Sakal. Some of her short stories were published in newspaper dailies like Hindustan Times, Dombivli Kalyan Plus of Times of India, etc. She is a poet who writes in 4 languages. Her English poems were published in magazines such as Life positive, while some of her Hindi and Marathi compositions have been presented as dance pieces. In 2016, along with Ravi, she published a tri-lingual book which is a compilation of their poems titled 'Do Kavitatein'. Knowing it is time to give back to the society, Shital with Ravi co-founded Saaraakassh Trust in 2015. [www.saaraakassh.net](http://www.saaraakassh.net) | [www.dishaforu.com](http://www.dishaforu.com)

# Style Guide

## **Citation Style: Author-Date Referencing System of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chapter 15, 17<sup>th</sup> edition)**

Authors should adopt the in-text parenthetical Author-Date citation system from Chapter 15 of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17<sup>th</sup> edition).

Some examples are listed below

### **1) BOOKS**

#### **REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:**

Book references should be listed at the end of the paper as “Works Cited” in alphabetical order.

#### **Single Author**

Carson, Rachel. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: HMH Books.

#### **Dual Authors**

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1997. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

#### **Multiple Authors**

Berkman, Alexander, Henry Bauer, and Carl Nold. 2011. *Prison Blossoms: Anarchist Voices from the American Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

#### **Anthologies**

Petra Ramet, Sabrina, ed. 1993. *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press

#### **IN-TEXT CITATION:**

References to the specific pages of the books should be made in parenthesis within the text as follows:

(Carson 2002, 15)

(Adorno and Horkheimer 1997, 23)

(Berkman, Bauer, and Nold 2011, 100-102)

(Sabrina 1993, 122-135)

Please refer to 15.40–45 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details.

## 2) CHAPTERS FROM ANTHOLOGIES

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Chapters should be listed in “Works Cited” in alphabetical order as follows:

#### Single Author

Dunstan, John. 1993. “Soviet schools, atheism and religion.” In *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet, 158–86. New York: Cambridge University Press

#### Multiple Authors

Kinlger, Samuel A., and Paul H. De Vries. 1993. “The Ten Commandments as values in Soviet people’s consciousness.” In *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet, 187–205. New York: Cambridge University Press

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Dunstan 1993, 158–86)

(Kingler and De Vries 1993, 190)

Please see 15.36 and 15.42 of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details.

## 3) E-BOOK

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

List should follow alphabetical order. The URL or the name of the database should be included in the reference list. Titles of chapters can be used instead of page numbers.

Borel, Brooke. 2016. *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ProQuest Ebrary.

Hodgkin, Thomas. 1897. *Theodoric the Goth: The Barbarian Champion of Civilisation*. New York: Knickerbocker Press. Project Gutenberg.  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20063/20063-h/20063-h.htm>

Maalouf, Amin. 1991. *The Gardens of Light*. Hachette Digital. Kindle.

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Borel 2016, 92)

(Hodgkin 1897, chap. 7)

(Maalouf 1991, chap. 3)

**4) JOURNAL ARTICLE****REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:**

List should follow alphabetical order and mention the page range of the published article. The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography."

*American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (January): 859–903.

Ayers, Lewis. 2000. "John Caputo and the 'Faith' of Soft-Postmodernism." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March): 13–31.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000006500102>

Dawson, Doyne. 2002. "The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?" *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February): 43–59.

**IN-TEXT CITATION:**

Specific page numbers must be included for the parenthetical references within texts (Anheier, Gerhards, and Romo 1995, 864)

(Ayers 2000, 25-31)

(Dawson 2002, 47-57)

For further details please see 15.46–49 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

**5) NEWS OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE****REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:**

List should follow alphabetical order and need not mention the page numbers or range. The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Hitchens, Christopher. 1996. "Steal This Article." *Vanity Fair*, May 13, 1996

<https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1996/05/christopher-hitchens-plagiarism-musings>

Khan, Saeed. 2020. "1918 Spanish Flu cure ordered by doctors was contraindicated in Gandhiji's Principles". *Times of India*, April 14, 2020.

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

Klein, Ezra. 2020. "Elizabeth Warren has a plan for this too." *Vox*, April 6, 2020.

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/6/21207338/elizabeth-warren-coronavirus-covid-19-recession-depression-presidency-trump>.

**IN-TEXT CITATION:**

(Hitchens 1996)



(Khan 2020)

(Klein 2020)

See 15.49 (newspapers and magazines) and 15.51 (blogs) in *The Chicago Manual of Style* for further details

## 6) BOOK REVIEW

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Methven, Steven. 2019. "Parricide: On Irad Kimhi's Thinking and Being." Review of *Thinking and Being*, by Irad Kimhi. *The Point Magazine*, October 8, 2019

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Methven 2019)

## 7) INTERVIEW

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

West, Cornel. 2019. "Cornel West on Bernie, Trump, and Racism." Interview by Mehdi Hassan. *Deconstructed*, The Intercept, March 7, 2019.  
<https://theintercept.com/2019/03/07/cornel-west-on-bernie-trump-and-racism/>

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(West 2019)

## 8) THESIS AND DISSERTATION

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Rustom, Mohammed. 2009. "Quranic Exegesis in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra's *Tafsir Surat al-Fatiha*." PhD diss., University of Toronto.

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Rustom 2009, 68-85)

## 9) WEBSITE CONTENT

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Website content can be restricted to in-text citation as follows: “As of May 1, 2017, Yale’s home page listed . . .”. But it can also be listed in the reference list alphabetically as follows. The date of access can be mentioned if the date of publication is not available.

Anthony Appiah, Kwame. 2014. “Is Religion Good or Bad?” Filmed May 2014 at TEDSalon, New York.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame\\_anthony\\_appiah\\_is\\_religion\\_good\\_or\\_bad\\_this\\_is\\_a\\_trick\\_question](https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question)

Yale University. n.d. “About Yale: Yale Facts.” Accessed May 1, 2017.

<https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Anthony Appiah 2014)

(Yale University, n.d.)

For more examples, see 15.50–52 in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For multimedia, including live performances, see 15.57.

## 9) SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

Social media content can be restricted to in-text citation without being mentioned in the reference list as follows:

Conan O’Brien’s tweet was characteristically deadpan: “In honor of Earth Day, I’m recycling my tweets” (@ConanOBrien, April 22, 2015).

It could also be cited formally by being included in the reference list as follows:

Chicago Manual of Style. 2015. “Is the world ready for singular they? We thought so back in 1993.” Facebook, April 17, 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoManual/posts/10152906193679151>.

Souza, Pete (@petesouza). 2016. “President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit.” Instagram photo, April 1, 2016.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/>.

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Chicago Manual of Style 2015)

(Souza 2016)

## 9) PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

### REFERENCE LIST ENTRY:

The expression “personal communication” covers email, phone text messages and social media (such as Facebook and WhatsApp) messages. These are typically cited in parenthetical in-text citation and are not mentioned in the reference list.

### IN-TEXT CITATION:

(Sam Gomez, Facebook message to author, August 1, 2017)

**Notes should preferably be listed as endnotes, followed by a works cited/references column.**

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