

Philosophy of Political Decentralization: A Gandhian Perspective

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Certified that this Thesis entitled, **Philosophy of Political Decentralization: A Gandhian Perspective** submitted by M. Balaji, in partial fulfillment of the requirements, for the award of Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy**, is a record of original research work done by him during his period of study at Pondicherry University, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree or Diploma or any other similar title and it is an independent work done by him.

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DECLARATION

I, M. Balaji, do hereby declare that the Thesis entitled, “**Philosophy of Political Decentralization: A Gandhian Perspective**”, submitted by me is an independent research work carried out by me towards the award for the degree of the Pondicherry University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy, is a record of original research done by me. This thesis has not previously formed the basis of any Degree/Diploma/Associateship/Fellowship or any other similar title.

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Dedicated to my beloved Parents

Mrs. M. Vijaya and Mr. N. Murugaiyan

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CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page No |
|--|----------------|
| Chapter I | |
| Introduction | 01-29 |
| Chapter II | |
| Gandhi: The Political Reformer | 30-74 |
| Chapter III | |
| Gandhi's Political Philosophy | 75-138 |
| Chapter IV | |
| The Concept of Political Decentralization | 139-202 |
| Chapter V | |
| Conclusion | 203-215 |
| Bibliography | 216-223 |

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Introduction

Political philosophy is the reflection our collective life, our political institutions and our pattern of family life. It is the study of the issues such as liberty, justice, property, rights, law and the enforcement of a legal code by authority: what they are, why (or even if) they are needed and also what makes a Government, legitimate, what rights and freedom should be protected and in what form it should take and why, what the law is and what are the duties of the citizens that owe to a legitimate Government. Political philosophers always interested to establish the basic principles such as justifying and revealing particular form of the state and try to establish that the individuals have certain inalienable rights or guide us how the society's material resources should be shared among its members. Political philosophy usually deals with analyzing and interpreting ideas like freedom, justice, authority and democracy. It tries to apply them in a critical way to the contemporary social and political institutions.

The topic selection of the research is not simply rests on the fact that the researcher should be acquainted with the thinker or the subject based matter on which he is going to work. I perceive it as far more than that. One has to be academically and personally oriented to do research on a particular topic. I have selected the topic by considering both these factors. On academic grounds there are two ways for topic selection: first one is thinker based, the second is concept based. I am more interested in thinker-based topics. In fact one can do justice to a

thinker-based topic by dealing with the perspective of the thinker. That's why I have selected thinker-based topic for my research. By choosing this topic, I strive to enlighten Gandhiji as the political philosopher, various issues involved in politics and try to establish that Political decentralization is the only alternative to the contemporary political problems of the world.

To understand the philosophy of Gandhi, It is necessary to understand the conditions of the country that are prevailed during that period and also the background of the family in which he has born. Gandhi was the Indian political and spiritual leader called mahatma (The Great Soul). In his time India was ruled by the British government as one of the colonies. The Indians were suffering from the British coercion power and exploited by that government. When Gandhi returned from South Africa to India, the people were struggling for the freedom. Thereafter he involved in India's struggle for independence from British through the campaign based on non-violence and civil disobedience. His doctrine of non-violent action left profound influence on Martin Luther King, the leader of civil rights movement in the United States of America and Nelson Mandela, the most prominent figure of the black opposition to apartheid in South Africa. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in Poorbandar, Kathiawal, on the western coast of India. For several generations, the Gandhi's had been Prime Ministers in several Kathiawal States. Karamchand Gandhi, his father was the chief minister of Porbandar and also a member of the Rajasthanik Court. Putlibai, Gandhi's mother was a deeply religious Hindu. When Gandhi was sixteen, his father died - four years later he lost his mother. Gandhiji used to say that, the outstanding impression my mother has left on my memory is that of saintliness. Gandhi was married at the age of thirteen, which was not an unusual custom. His bride, Kasturba, also was thirteen. She was the only daughter of rich merchants. She influenced Gandhi's thought, speech and actions. Gandhi went to London to study law in 1888. There he began to experiment with

diet and other things that are continued throughout his lifetime. Then he returned India and practiced as a barrister in Bombay. After sometime, Gandhi had moved to South Africa in 1893. There he became a tenacious political activist and got recognition by the Indian settlers. Gandhi courageously opposed the Transvaal government's inequitable legislation against Indian settlers. Gandhi remained in South Africa for twenty years and developed a system of non-violent disobedience. For his services during the Boer War (1899-1902) Gandhi was awarded the War Medal. Gandhi returned permanently to India in 1914 and he became a highly influential figure in the National Congress and also he transformed it into an instrument of change. To secure Swaraj (independence) from British he launched the policy of non-violence and non-co-operation. This process made Gandhi a guru like figure. He adapted the resistance methods of strikes, refusal to pay taxes, abandonment of western dress and refusal to respect colonial law. Gandhi himself too adopted a simple and ascetic way of life, dressing in a loincloth of hand-woven and sandals. He was imprisoned several times and went on hunger strikes to focus attention on his cause. When communal riots started on India's northwest frontier in 1924, Gandhi undertook a twenty one-day purificatory fast. In another occasion he had walked some 200 miles on foot to collect salt illegally, the Viceroy started to relieve the punitive salt taxes and the government monopoly.

His ideological foundation was derived from the liberal-humanist values that he had engaged in England, exemplified in the works of Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson. Gandhi's political thoughts stems from different traditions of both Eastern and Western ideologies. Though he had inherited many traditions, he did not agree with anyone of them. He had picked up many traditional concepts from his immediate predecessors as well as from ancient texts. Gandhi never claimed to be an original thinker. But when we look into his sayings, we can find a

common conceptual framework like a philosopher. “Gandhi accepted idealism and hence he believed in the supremacy of ethical absolutism and the sociology of Sarvodaya (the good of all).”¹ Gandhian ideal society is described in frankly in anarchist terms: political power means capacity to regulate national life through the national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. Moreover, when we find his theoretical formulations and practical pursuits they are identical, there is every reason to accept him as a philosopher in the Indian sense. Unlike other philosophers and political scientists of both the East and the West, he emerged not only as the man of destiny of the nation but also as the man of the millennium. Many political thinkers said that, Gandhi was combination of a spiritualist and a politician of the maximum competence. He combined the aspects of the Philosopher and politician within himself. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a great admirer and critic of Gandhi once said that Gandhiji was playing the roles of a supreme leader of the Indian National Liberation Movement as well as the world teacher. In a tone of criticism he further said, often his later role is the role of a world teacher, became so prominent that he had to compromise with his other role. Somebody may or may not agree with Netaji Bose but it appears that in the context of national liberation movement it is proved. When we took into the in depth study of Gandhi's teachings and his Philosophy, we can realize that there is no dichotomy in Gandhi's insight. That is to say, for Gandhi politics is the best instrument to strengthen the mankind in social, economic, moral and spiritual fields. Gandhi himself has admitted this with his South African friend, that his bent of mind was religious and not political. Romain Rolland in his biography of Gandhi written in 1924 and remarked that if Tilak would not have died Gandhi might have chosen a religious life rather than a political. To

¹. Verinder Grover (ed.), *Political thinkers of modern India*, Vol-7, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1990, p. 667.

Gandhi politics was his religion. He opposed politicizing the religion instead. He spiritualizes it. He was essentially a worldly man and never sought his own salvation secluded from the world. For him politics encircled like the coil of a snake. After that there is no respite for him. He could have avoided politics, if food and work are provided to the hungry unemployed people of India. He consciously felt that it is not possible to eradicate socio-economic exploitation and political suppression without involving in politics. Because it leads to moral degradation of the people.

Indian Political Tradition

The Indian tradition of political thoughts began with the Vedas and Upanishads. The historical development of political ideas found that the concept of Swaraj, self-government, constantly inspired the people. From the Vedas and Upanishads and also through the writings of Thiruvalluvar (the Tamil saint and poet), Jnaneshwara and Shivaji, the political ideas of Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhi, Swaraj has been continuously discussed. Indian political thought cannot be isolated from Hindu philosophy. Gandhi said that “I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political, and religious. All act and react upon one another.”² The Hindu political system is the oldest among the world. It is contained in the Rig-Veda and continued in other vedic Samhitas and also in the Brahmanas. They deal with the basic principles of the origin of social order and the position of the ruler in relation to the ruled. Subsequently, a number of works on law called Dharmashastras or treatises on Dharma of Manu appeared on the scene. They not only analyze every detail of the conduct of administration and Government but also discussed about the functioning of the household.

². Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.03.1922, p.131.

In early stages, there are many visionaries like the cosmic visionary of Manu, the heroic visionary of Valmiki and Vyasa, the moral visionary of Sukra and Brihaspati, the Sramanic visionary of Buddha and Mahavira and the Imperial visionary of Barni and Fazal etc. The ancient Indian states practiced seven constituents as “(1)Svamin (King), (2)amatyas (ministers), (3) janapada or rastra (territory and the people), (4) durgas (forts) or pura (nagara or capital city), (5) kosha (treasury), (6) danda or bala (army), mitra (allies).”³ These seven were called as saptanga Rajya in ancient time. They conceived state as an organic unity like the human body. These seven parts of the state has been considered equally important and complementary to each other. It is a fact that, the co-ordination and integration of these constituent parts of the state is a necessary factor to the existence, growth and proper functioning of the state.

According to Manu, politics is integral to the society. It is a basic factor without which the society cannot function. The basic governing principle dharma, strives for the welfare of others. He talked about the four types of structural arrangements of the state. They are:

(1) Organization of the state- suggested the ascending cycles of village, districts and province.

(2) Taxation- it would help to development of the national wealth.

(3) Wages- it was fixed on the basis of earners merits.

(4) Public opinion- this was the assembly of the learned as well as the officers of the state.

³. Sing, G. P., *Political Thoughts in Ancient India*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 1993, p.21. Cited

This was one kind of arrangement to decide the issue on the basis of dharma. Another important thing in Manu's political thoughts is the decentralization and welfare activity. "The village and district authorities have been given sufficient autonomy to control their affairs as it is supposed that the king shall not interfere in their affairs until he discovers that they are unable to solve their problems at their own level."⁴ The state is described as "a good kingdom is that in which many saintly people live, there is no disease, fruits and vegetables are grown in plenty, people are polite and fearless and there are good crops and easy commerce."⁵ Kautilya, was the first one who makes Political Economy as an independent discipline. He wrote Arthashastra and emphasized the need for a strong political centre in India. He preached the necessity of order of the society and state he opposed against anarchy because, he thought that the society can never be peace for without a strong state. According to him, the king must ensure the four caste people and four orders of life. The king required to construct dams, rivers, roads and maintains forests. Kautilya divided the ministers according to their qualities. "The king must appoint amatyas after taking into consideration their knowledge, wisdom, courage, virtues and vices, etc."⁶ The Territory (*janapada*) is another important thing in ancient political thought and it has been called as *rajyabhumi or rastra*. This includes the rural areas as well as the territory of a state having both cities and villages. In the Buddhist text's janapadah appeared as inhabitants of the territory. Somadeva was a jain saint and also the most important political thinker during the beginning of the middle ages in India. He said that, the science of politics deals with the protection of the good and control of the wicked. To him the state should be the welfare state. The rulers are more akin to the constitutional monarch than to a typical despot and the king must have a council of ministers to advise to the king.

⁴. Mehta, V. R., *Foundations of Indian Political Thought*, New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributers, 1999, p.38.

⁵. *ibid.* p. 35

⁶. Sing, G. P., *op.cit.*, pp. 65-66.

The Indian political tradition has been continued by Raja Rammohan Ray (1772- 1833), Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Sri Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950), M.N. Roy (1886-1954), Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) and Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902-1979) etc. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the father of constitutional agitation in India and was the first campaigner of social reconstruction. He protested against the female depression by male in Hindu society. He was one of the earliest exponents of freedom of the press and also the pioneer of religious reform. He introduced western education in modern India, “Rammohan Roy always championed the causes of liberty, constitutionalism, democratic rights and parliamentary democracy for every country of the world.”⁷ To him liberty is an invaluable tenure of people.

Swamy Dayanand Saraswati and his Arya Smaj has very much influenced the Indian political tradition, his concepts of education, nationalism , theory of state and government and his teachings of religion, culture, women’s empowerment and social reforms led to the political extremism towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. “Swami Dayanand was the first Indian who declared: ‘Swaraj is our birthright’. He held that India should belong to Indians and she ought to be made free and independent”⁸ He was the exponent of the concept of Swadesi, at the later stages became a powerful tool in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi. As an ardent patriot, Vivekananda established the sense of indentity-consciousness with the country. He gave spiritual approach to the democracy. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the Guru and political mentor of Gandhi; he was devoted to the cause of nation building and committed to the

⁷. Das. H. H. and. Patro, P. S. N, *Indian Political Traditions*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1989, P. 49.

⁸. *ipid.* p. 78

path of truth and non-violence. Lokmanya Tilak popularized four concepts: Swaraj, Swadeshi, national education and boycott. Swaraj for him was self-government. He claimed that with Swaraj, everybody would be free and have a right to participate in the government of the country. He demanded national self-determination for all colonized countries and argued that India's freedom would usher in the freedom of other countries. He declared that Swaraj was his birthright and he would secure it. To him Swaraj as the necessary foundation of social and political freedom and he realized that the achievement of Swaraj was a moral and national necessity.

Sri Aurobindo also contributed to Indian political thinking. He opposed the fundamental principles of Western political thought, which were based on cleavage and conflict. He held that the primary aim of a state was to unite different sections of society into a living whole, pulsating with new ideas. He put forward the concept of Mother India who represented all individual souls living in India. He wanted Indians to develop their own philosophy of life as well as their own model of political development. He did not want them to be docile pupils of the Occident. It was the bounded duty of all citizens to oppose an unjust government, because injustice breeds further injustice. In his important work *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*, published in 1947, he discussed the essence of ancient Indian polity in detail. It was his contention that the Indian model of state building was far superior to the Western because it was a bottom up structure, a complex union of self-governing communal bodies which enjoyed complete autonomy. Secondly, Indians did not impose change from above, as they aspired for change from within. Because of this reason there was little opposition to change. A proper balance between continuity and change was established and the Indian politics retained its capacity of self-renewal. Other civilizations, perhaps the Chinese, lacked this capacity. According to Sri Aurobindo nationalism

based on spiritualism laid stress on moral and mental improvement. He said that democracy and socialism as the byproducts of humanism. “According to him the state is not an organism; it is machinery and it works like a machine, without tact, taste, delicacy or intention. He was opposed to the interference of the state in the sphere of education, culture and religion.”⁹ He was against to the centralization of political power in the hands of government. As mentioned above, the Indian political tradition followed by Nehru. He said that, democracy means tolerance. Nehru has talking about nationalism, secularism and internationalism. He believed in the theory and practice of parliamentary democracy and said that democracy is the best form of Government as it preserves the highest human values.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the most stupendous men in the twentieth century. He regarded himself as the first and foremost active theoretician, where action and theory entangled to produce a theoretical construct that defies strict categorization. He considered himself to be a philosophical anarchist or a minimalist but there are aspects that make Gandhi a conservative, a liberal and a socialist. Gandhian philosophical aspects of politics, social, economic, religious and moral are inter-related with one another. Especially the socio-economic and political philosophy of Gandhi is mainly ethical based. All these concepts practiced by him in his life time, so he was not only a theorist but also a perfect practical philosopher. “Gandhi was a political actionist and a practical philosopher; he was not a theorist, his writings were bound with inconsistencies-one result of his persistent habit of thinking in public. Whatever philosophical formulations he made were inspired by and directed towards solving of immediate problems.”¹⁰ Gandhian philosophy is the repository of ancient Indian philosophical thoughts. He made the teachings of the Isopanisad, the Bhagavad Gita and the

⁹. ipid. p. 148.

¹⁰. Joan V Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, California, 1971, p. 07.

Yoga Sutras as the chief foundations of his practical philosophy. There is nothing unique or original about his philosophy. Gandhi confirms this in his own words as “I do not claim to have originated any principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems.”¹¹ Gandhi was not a professional philosopher, he never attempted to construct a system of philosophy. He was mainly concerned with applying the ideals and principles that had unflinching faith. However, this does not imply that his thoughts were not systematic. One can argue that, his thoughts form a coherent whole, when his ideas are pierced together with the background of Hindu philosophy. One can find that his activities follow very closely to his view of life.

Gandhi said that the social, economic, political and religious actions cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. He unconsciously constructed an integrated system. Indeed Gandhi’s thoughts are the crystallized implications of Hindu philosophical tradition. The hard core Vedantic tradition made Gandhi to call himself a vedantin. The essence of Indian Philosophical tradition, which was practiced for the whole of his life, affirmed briefly in terms of the purusarthas and also in the goals of dharma, artha, kama and moksa. Gandhian ideas are very much relevant in metaphysical, political, social, economic and ecological spheres. Gandhi was a philosopher on one hand and a karmayogi on the other. He preached non-violence on one hand and not ready to accept cowardice on the other. Mahatma Gandhi was an outstanding personality of the world in general and India in particular. He has various identifications as a freedom fighter, philosopher, a political thinker, a social reformer, a spiritualist, a moralist, an economist and also as an educationalist. He is a cosmopolitan. He is universally known as a socio-economic and political genius and religious leader. He occupied an unique place in Indian history as a free

¹¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Ethical Religion*, Madras: 1922, p.16.

and frank interpreter of Hinduism. He has shown his greatness in constantly testing and verifying the truth which he practiced and preached in his daily life. Though he never claimed himself as a philosopher, a kind of philosophy is clearly traceable in his writings, speeches, plans and schemes. All of them consist of an underlying unity. According to Kripalani, in Gandhian thought the unity that runs through his concrete schemes and plans made his programmes a single whole. It makes a complete system of philosophy with its distinct ideology. Gandhi is a single word that echoed the dreams of millions of people. A single entity beared the burden of a whole nation. He became the hope to millions of Indians who bowed under the weight of years of slavery. A person who was in the forefront of India's freedom struggle was a mystery that still fails not to wonder was he a man, who could talk with crowds and still keep his virtue or walk with kings and not lose the common feel. Gandhi was one of the greatest revolutionaries of the world. He can be considered as an anti-colonial revolutionary through the soul-force (satyagraha). This kind of revolution gave new confidence and strength to the oppressed minorities and downtrodden people all over the world. Gandhian philosophy has always been a topic of discussion especially in the contemporary world where his ideas appear redundant amidst the pragmatism and materialism.

Generally Politics is regarded as a game to attain power, to regain power and to maintain power. In the western concept, politics has been viewed as power, where morality or value had no place. But now this concept has almost been abandoned. The western thinkers have started talking about the moral values in politics. From the very beginning, for Gandhi, politics was all pervading and hence his war of Indian Independence had to be fought with the twin weapons of Truth and Non-violence, which ultimately became a movement and he called it Satyagraha. For him, politics opens the door of 'service' and not for misusing power. The main aim of the

constructive work is to eradicate the disabilities of the people at the socio-economic, political and spiritual levels. Wars and conflicts arise quite often from the problems all around. The constructive work goes to the roots of wars and is needed to set right things everywhere. For taking any movement to the 'grass root' level constructive work is needed. Gandhian constructive work has various items in itself. According to Gandhi, politics is a moral problem of value. The political theorist, Arnold Brecht has been beautifully defined this as "Scientific Value Relativism"¹². To him the justification of politics is an expression of moral life. So the state is judged by the qualities of its individuals, whose moral development can help or hinder. It is necessary to revolutionize politics by ethics. "Unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of political system and constitutions will not work."¹³ If we are going to analyze the relationship between the morality and politics: we can realize one thing, without moral or ethical concepts, politics cannot sustain and it should be inconsistent with people's welfare in a natural way. In Prof. A. Shishkin's words, Morals serve the cause of progress. Morality serves the great task of the social revolutions of our times.

In our day today life we see that, politics is rooted in the deception and untruthfulness. It is bound to create greater deceit and greater dishonesty. It is an eternal fact that, the concept of hate must generate hate and violence leads to the greater violence. "Moral development takes place in the individual and this makes the individual the one supreme consideration. But man is a social animal – Religion as ethics can not avoid politics."¹⁴ Thus the need of the hour is to moralize politics. Gandhi's predictive emphasis is: there is no politics devoid of religion. It was Gandhi and Gandhi alone who was in reality, experienced politics on religious foundations in the

¹². Brecht. A, *Political Theory: The Foundation of Twentieth Century Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, 1959, Chapter-XI.

¹³. Narayan, J. P., *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, Rajghat: Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, 1959, p. 3.

¹⁴. Subrata Mukherjee and Susila Ramaswamy (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 4

Indian Freedom Movement. He always highlighted that politics bereft of religion is a death trap. So far, the world has seen only the use of corporeal power and the power of law but Gandhi had carved out the third force or the self-reliant moral power of the people. Gandhi emphasized the people's politics against the party Politics. He thought that, the authority must be equally shared into the hands of the people at all levels. Gandhi had suggested the party less democracy. The surfacing of people's democracy will be the bearer of new era of democratic decentralization i.e. the Swaraj (Self-Rule) is needed from below. Swaraj means positive freedom used by Gandhi, participating in the process of politics in every possible way, rather than conceiving the state as a negative institution by restricting its activities to the bare minimum. It did not mean that the state was all powerful, rather an intimate relationship should exist between the state and all its citizens. To him, swaraj implied participatory democracy. In Gandhian Politics, democracy developed into the rule of the populace and depends ultimately upon the power of the people and not upon the power of the police or military. Therefore the functioning of democracy and violence is not possible in the system of politics. So Gandhi implores for the moralization of needs and voluntary action as the basis of democratic life and culture. The significance of diminishing coercion entails the closest possible estimate to a decentralized polity. Voluntary co-operation demanded a federation of village communities.

In the 20th century Gandhi was the only person who offered the reforms without destruction, unlike Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mao. Gandhi out of the other dominated political revolutionaries of the world, holds the non-violent satyagraha as a means to achieve the political as well as social ends, where as other world countries opt for violent military force. Satyagraha is the moral instrument used by Gandhi against the political and social evils. He chose this either for the remedy of particular grievances or for the wide purpose of achieving

independence. Gandhi opposed injustice and exploitation through satyagraha and tried to purify the politics by incorporating the moral and spiritual ideals in politics. To Gandhi this is an alternative to the violent army force. Against the totalitarian government, in USA Dr. Martin Luther King II and the Norwegians school teachers in 1942-43 against quisling government demonstrates the power and strength of the non-violent resistance (Satyagraha). Consequently Gandhian Politics has a dominant and constructive role played in Indian national movement. He was against utter patriotism, at the same time he suggested internationalism through nationalism. Liberty and autonomy of the individual as well as the nation was the higher values of his concept of politics. Through deliverance of India, he said, "I seek to deliver the so called weaker races of the earth from the crushing wheels of western exploitation."¹⁵ It is a fact that after India attains independence most of the weaker nations of the world become known as free nations. That means under the leadership of Gandhi and his ideals, we fought not only for our own independence but also others Independence and the latest in the series is the war of Bangladesh's freedom in 1971. Now, we cannot say the politics of exploitation has been eradicated but it is controlled or minimized through democratic ideals. According to Gandhi party politics should be substituted by people's power. Service to the people and their better life is progressively becoming the ultimate aim of the states all over the world and hence application of Gandhian Politics cannot be diminished.

Philosophical Background of Gandhi's Thoughts

The fundamental metaphysical notion of Gandhism is an omnipresent spiritual reality. "An all embracing living light, it can be called sachchidhananda or Brahman."¹⁶ Gandhi accepts

¹⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 12.1.1928.

¹⁶. Verinder Grover (ed.), op.cit., p. 9.

Sachchidananda as the highest conceptual formulation of reality. According to Gandhi, wherever there is truth there is knowledge, wherever there is knowledge there is bliss. To him truth is eternal, non-contradictory, all pervading principle; it is the basic tenet in Gandhism. Gandhi is the traditional Hindu and a true Vedandian. He was very much influenced by Hindu philosophy. It is a fact that “Gandhi was a metaphysical idealist but not exactly of the Sankarite School. His views are more akin to these of the theistic interpreters of Vedanta like Ramanuja and Madva.”¹⁷ To Gandhi, ‘God is Truth’ and it is the indweller, all powerful, omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. Gandhi accepted world as the real or existent. The Parabramha ‘sat’ is the supreme essence and the primordial being. Gandhi conceived sat or Truth not only as an ethical category but as an ontological being of the highest realm. To him truth is not merely a theoretical value or intrinsic moral ideal but is the highest reality. He did not reject the cosmos as Maya or indescribable illusion but felt that the absolute majesty of God is expressed in the realm of cosmic phenomena. Since beginning the human thought is in quest of ‘truth’ both spiritual and material, both transcendent and immanent. But the most important aspect of Gandhian thought was the means of quest of truth, without exception, non-violent in thought, word, deed and full of love. Every great life is a commendable resist of man’s truth against deprivation and denaturing which results from colonial status on one hand and from the industrial civilization on the other. In both cases, the method of preservation and liberation is the same; that is non-violence or ahimsa. The life of Gandhi was a life of constant action and experimentation, to know the truth and to live in it. He considered this as light and this light never ceased to illuminate his awareness and spread its luminosity among those people with whom he worked. They shared his efforts and followed his discipline and millions of people touched by the strength of his faith, the loftiness, aims and principles. He is a superb politician who led the masses of India towards

¹⁷. *ibid*, p.10.

freedom and self-confidence; a constant seeker of truth who followed the path of saintliness; a teacher in the larger sense, who keenly felt the call for instructing and uplifting his fellow beings; these were the roles of politician, saint and teacher. All these are joined together in his life. Gandhi's life and work were based on the principles like humanism which is expressed in non-violence and truth, the exaltation of means over end and the stress on duty rather than rights. Justice to him was devotion to the cause of the oppressed and liberty connoted duty more than rights. These principles provided the key to his conception of the art of life. These are derived from a strong moral foundation.

Nationalism and Internationalism

India as a multi diversified country has been committed with universalism or internationalism since thousands of years. It can be well acknowledged and understood through India's ancient slogan of 'Vasudhaika Kutumbakam'. Beyond this, thousands of years old harmonious and evolutionary Indian Culture, through the practices of its up bringers, Indians have also been categorically reiterating their commitment towards internationalism. Nationalism is not narrow-minded or exclusive to Mahatma Gandhi, but it is the part of his search for truth through unity in diversity and through selfless service. Gandhi said that, the Nationalism is not the highest concept; the highest concept is world community. These were the expressions of his swadeshi spirit, as a part of the global good, which seeks food for the nearer society. "I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England and Germany to serve India."¹⁸ Gandhi always hate hurting anyone by word, deed and action. According to Gandhi nationalism is an antecedent and Internationalism is a consequent. Internationalism

¹⁸.Gandhi, M. K., *Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.19, Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 427.

derived from the well developed nationalism. To him this is also the developing process of world community. He says about nationalism: “Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact....It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil.”¹⁹ This is the earlier and later stages of the same process. To him nationalism is a step towards internationalism. Gandhi’s nationalism, “fierce though it is, is not exclusive, not designed to harm any nation or individual.”²⁰ He says nationalism should be indispensable precondition of sound internationalism. “Through Swaraj, we would serve the whole world.”²¹ Indian nationalism is inclusive not exclusive, it is non-violent not aggressive or destructive. It is health giving, spiritual and which is, humanitarian, “India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity.”²² Mahatma Gandhi, who was a firm believer of Ahimsa and a forebear of Indian culture in his period said, If I would like liberty for my country I do not want that liberty in order that I belong to a country which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other group or sect upon the earth, or any single individual. If I would like that liberty for my nation, I would not be deserving of that liberty if I did not cherish and treasure of equal right of every other group or sect, weak or strong, to the same liberty. This is the statement that has full capability for expounding the fact of India’s commitment on internationalism. Concurrently, his subsequent statement is also similarly appropriate and significant in this regard: in the course of the liberation of India, I seek to liberate the so-called weaker races of the earth from crushing heels of Western exploitation. India coming to her own will mean that every nation doing likewise. Mahatma Gandhi’s principle of Sarvodaya, is the consequent of Indian tradition and values is influenced by Ruskin’s

¹⁹. *ibid*, Vol. 27, op.cit, p.255.

²⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 26.03.1931, p. 51.

²¹. Gandhi, M. K., op,cit., 16.04.1931, p. 79.

²². Gandhi, M. K., op,cit., 13.10.1921, p. 326.

theory of 'Unto This Last', can be considered to be the best way to human equality. This is the principle that endorses equal value for the labour of an intellectual as well as the manual without any caste, class, gender, community or territory-based discrimination. Instead of the utilitarian theory of greatest happiness of the greatest number it talks about greatest happiness to all. This concept always give full scope for equality in distribution of opportunities. This firmly expose that the greatest happiness to greatest number is ever inclusive in greatest happiness to all. Internationalism reveals in a beautiful manner in Gandhi's philosophy of Sarvodaya through bringing the whole humanity in to its fold. And also he said that, "I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and a pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world."²³ Gandhi expressed as follows "My idea of nationalism is that my country may die so that the human race may live."²⁴ Gandhi always preaching the individual freedom, meantime he asses the friendly relationship with one another. He suggested the federal system of Government for the welfare of the world. The theory of Trusteeship, of Gandhi is alternative to the violence-based institution like the State, which clearly reflects the insight of internationalism. Gandhi as one of the great anarchists is in favour of abolishing the institution of the State gradually. In place of the State he stresses upon the establishment of a worldly order based on equality. It is in fact a step beyond internationalism. It includes the whole humanity without any disparities and territorial frontier that comes together and becomes identical. Gandhi said that, "The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent states warning one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent states."²⁵ He is a cosmopolitan, the universal being; He said that, "The only condition on which the world can live is being united under one central

²³. Gandhi, M. K., op,cit., 17.09.1925, p. 321.

²⁴. Desai, Mahadev, *Gandhijee in Indian Villages*, Madras: S. Ganesan, 1927, p. 170.

²⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 26.12.1924.

governing body composed of representatives of the component parts.”²⁶ Therefore, Gandhi tried to build up the moral based world Government because it would have heralded an era of peace. The representative of the people for the world Government should be morally developed because, they play the important role in the peace making process. However, Gandhi’s moralized and decentralized the political system and Vishwa Shanti Sena (International Peace Force) is very much ensuring the peace of the world. In the present day situation and Globalization Gandhiji’s self-governing nationalism and co-operative federal internationalism are more relevant and necessary to take practice to make the peace in world.

Centralization

The Centralized Government shares power to the lower units of Government only as it sees fit, maintaining supreme authority. That means the centralized Government can change the authority of local Governments or abolish or even abolish them if it desired to do so. Some political theorists think that in the centralized Government there is an intimidate individual freedom. The rationale of decentralized governance is also derived from the known drawbacks of centralized decision-making process in the governing system. Being away from the basic spatial units such as rural communities, villages and with power centralization at the top in a pyramidic power base, the union and the state Government power organization draw representatives from the well-endowed sub-regions and sections of the community, at the same time it leaves the backward regions and weaker sections from the representation. This gives rise to the emergence of enclave-type power bases and disproportionate allocation of power among people. The interests, needs and ambition of some sections and of the people living in the backward and interior regions are

²⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 08.06.1947.

thus likely to be ignored in the decision-making process in centralized manner. Where there is centralized system of Government, there is hardly much scope for people's participation in governance process, the implementation of decision taken at the top Government levels becomes weak as it does not inspire or motivate people to extend their cooperation.

The political power and the Government tasks concentrate in the hands of a single authority in the forms of centralized Government. All the governmental powers are exercised by the central authority and the units of local Government such as cities and countries that are subjected to exercise those powers. In a uniform, "one-size-fits-all" approach to Government policies and programs is the result of the centralized Government. Besides this, in centralized Government the national interest takes priority over local interests. This contrasts with a decentralized federal system, such as the Government system of U.S.A., where the local interests and local resistance sometimes slow or block national actions. Some degree of centralization has been operating all most all Governments of the world. Centralized Government exists in degrees, from weak to strong centralization. For example in North Korea, the totalitarian Government ruled by a dictator, has an extremely centralized system of Government. In contrast, the United States and Canada, there is a practice of federal systems of Government with much less centralization. In United States, after American Revolution, a confederation of states with a weak national Government is established. However, the weaknesses of this arrangement led to the drafting of the U.S. Constitution and created a stronger national Government with limited powers. In drafting the Constitution, the framers wanted a strong national Government, but not one that retained many powers and threaten the liberties. As a result, they created a federal system in which the national Government has certain powers, while states retain the others. Centralized power is incapable of providing stability to the Government but, being colonial and

bureaucratic, it may give rise to the religious, ethnic and minority upsurges. It is admitted that monolithic states and progressive socialist states in power have vested interests in a central Government. They are more enlightened than the local Governments in protecting the larger interests of the poor and minorities. The centralized Government structures are successful to a larger extent in removing disparities. At the same time it has also been observed that under centralized governance, it is not possible to have a stable political system. Further centralized power is opposed to democratic values and approaches. This is mainly due to the nature of the state in colonization and also the position of the poor who are largely located in the rural areas in such a type of environment. There the real power is concentrated in urban and metropolitan cities, it is very hard to make any change in the rural poor and to share the benefits of development. Due to this situation migration has taken place and the trend is towards degeneration of rural assets and ecological imbalances. As a result of this centralization, local Governments with decentralization of political and economic power will emerge.

By nature human beings are the seekers of better life than the present. If we go back to history, we can realize this fact. In primitive stages people were lived with ignorance. After that, they became civilized. In this civilized state, there are many divisions and many groups emerged due to various reasons. Increasing vital wants and demands made people to exploit neighbors or other groups. People were enjoying some benefits and better life than others through this exploitation. The mental exploitative attitude created in the hierarchical structure of society. Those people hate hard work. The hierarchical society has lot of scope to exploit others through power centralization. The political power centralization focuses power at one particular point. By this power centralization, the top group of this hierarchy kept more power in its hand. Those using this power exploits lower group of this hierarchy. The first exploitative group create power

centralization. This well developed political power centralization encourages exploitation, social disparities, caste clashes, economic inequalities, sexual domination and poverty. To resolve these problems of centralization, we must seek an alternative method of political decentralization. At this juncture, Gandhi suggested political decentralization. By nature, it shares equal power with all. A politically decentralized society works against exploitation, social disparities, economic inequalities, sexual domination and poverty. Here there is no scope to hierarchy. Decentralization of political power is originated from the drawbacks of the political power centralization. Decentralization distributes equal power to all. So there is no possibility to exploitation, domination, hierarchy and inequalities. All these issues can be handled by political decentralization. In a politically decentralized society, there is no place to them. Because all people are enjoy equal opportunities. If any problems arise, they will be handled through the political powers. Here we can reduce army force; we can ensure individual freedom and empowerment. People have equal duties and responsibilities.

Political Ideas of Gandhi

The rationale of decentralized governance is derived from the drawbacks of centralized decision making of the macro Governmental levels. Being away from the basic spatial units such as hamlets and villages end with power concentrated at the top of the space in a pyramidic power base, the state and the union Government power structures draw representatives from the well-endowed sub-regions and also from the sections of the community, leaving the backward regions and weaker sections of unrepresented. This gives rise to the emergence of enclave-type power bases and imbalanced distribution of power among people. The interests, basic needs and aspirations of some sections of the people living in backward and interior regions are disregarded

under the centralized decision-making system. In the centralized system, there is no scope for people's participation, the implementation of decision taken at the top governmental levels becomes weak as it does not motivate people to extend their cooperation.

The Disadvantages of Centralization are;

- A) It dries up the springs of Patriotism in particular localities, it impairs the powers which may renew them,
- B) It fosters conspiracy while repressing the faction,
- C) And loses the assistance of society in the coercion of crime.

The factor of decentralization cropped up from the realm of constitutionalism, feudalism, public policies and machine management. These dimensions are poignant in the thought structure of Mahatma Gandhi. For him, decentralization is a by-product of the integration. It is based upon the human nature as well as on the ethical grounds. The entire spectrum of decentralization is articulated under the three hypotheses like:

- A) Sovereignty of the individual
- B) Village republic
- C) Philosophical anarchism.

All these aspects are clubbed under the ideal of Sarvodaya.

In the present globalized world, capitalism is gradually becoming strong. This leads to the number of political, economical and social problems of the individual as well as the society. The centralization of both political and economic power is the basic tenet to the concept of globalization. Politically it is very much supporting to the power centralization in hands of few or in one central point and encourages the exploitation, hierarchy, variations among the people, individual or certain group domination and always disturb the natural empowerment of the people and ruined the individual freedom, rural development, public participation in decision making process etc. Economically the globalization promotes the economic concentration, increase capital in few hands, generates the variation based on haves and have nots or rich and poor, destroyed the local industries (small industries) through the open market beyond the border etc. In addition to these, socially and morally also it supports the cultural domination, demolishes their own identity, machinery life style, immoral actions and unemployment etc. The Centralization of power which is based on globalization generates the problematic life. Above all the centralization of the political power has the most important role in the challenging life of the world. The political power is the regulative and generative authority of the national life. This political power centralization leads to the economic centralization and demolishes the values of freedom, equality and fraternity. Therefore the political power centralization is the basic cause to the worldly problems due to various bases. Because of its conceptual nature, the centralization of political power creates the pre-condition of emerging concept of political decentralization. By nature political decentralization is the process of power distribution to all. There is no such kind of variation in this process. In politically decentralized society there won't be any exploitative action and all are enjoying equal freedom and rights. It is always supporting to economic equality and giving equal opportunity.

Gandhi also talked about globalization in a positive manner. His uniqueness did not lie in the fact that he was extraordinary but lies on the simplicity of his reflective thoughts also. His idea of swadeshi talks of “production for neighbors” if applied to the world at large with his theory of “antyodaya” or “the last man” which speaks about providing the basic necessities can negate the effects of globalization by ensuring everyone the fruits of developmental process. His philosophy of “satyagraha” which means “the force which is born out of truth or violence” is required more in the contemporary world scenario where accumulation of nuclear weapons has become the means to attain the supremacy. Despite the efforts of various peace keeping forces, the threat of nuclear war persists sub-consciously in the contemporary world and the only method which has the potential to remove this “ever lingering fear” is satyagraha. In this regard there is enormous need for working on Gandhian political ideas. Because India and many other world countries are named as democratic but the power is concentrated in few hands. There are political parties, periodic elections and adult endorsement. But the power is in the hands of a few governing elites. About forty percent of the voters do not have time, energy and means to reach the polling booths. In the remaining sixty percent, hardly twenty to twenty five percent of them cast votes on their own. Every citizen has fundamental rights and courts are there to hear them in case of violation of these rights. But most of them owing to poverty and illiteracy unable to reach. Bureaucracy, police and other dictatorial organizations care very little for the woes of the common man. All these factors compel the masses to pin their hopes on some Gandhi-like leader who lead them and fight for their cause by various means and methods. There must be someone to show the path amidst the murky darkness of privatization and globalization in the right direction. Other acute crisis related to the pollution, lethal and nuclear weapons lead to the

extinction of the earth. Therefore, it is necessary to know about the ideological claims of the Gandhi, its ways and means.

I have followed the logical and analytical methods in the execution of thesis. The concepts of Gandhi and various political theories are well explained and logically evaluated on par with the world affairs. There are some misunderstandings about Gandhi that he was not a philosopher in the academic sense. His speeches, writings and actions consist of philosophical concepts and theories. He analyzed the drawbacks of the centralized political power and its effects of exploitation, hierarchy, corruption, inequalities and domination over the individuals, nations, war and terrorism which lead to the disturbed life of the world. This kind of power centralization issues prompted me to work in the above area with special reference to Gandhian perspective. His concern towards non-violent and moralized or self-evaluated way of the revolution and also the participation in the decision making process for the welfare of all people are also the reasons. They give scope for this thesis.

The present research mainly concerned with Gandhi's views on politics and decentralization basing on the philosophical ground. It also deals with the economic, social, religious and ethics. Because politics, economics, society, religion, ethics are closely connected with one another. It can be said that one concept leads to another. It is also difficult to separate and study them independently. Each chapter starts with a short chronological and theoretical introduction of the subject under study. This serves as a basis to understand the philosophical issues through the Gandhian perspective.

As per the chapterization: The first chapter gives brief Introduction about Gandhi and his philosophical thinking. It also expresses various influences on Gandhi. These influences have

significant role in shaping Gandhi's moral, political, economical and social philosophy. Here, I have explained the Indian political tradition, the philosophical background of Gandhian thought, his broad vision of internationalism through nationalism, the concept of centralization and its natures and features, the brief sketch about Gandhi's political ideas, the preconditions of the political decentralization, causes of its emergence and brief description of cauterization. Gandhism is a prominent means to solve the worldly problems and I clearly mentioned here about the need to study and its significance. Political traditions of India, Gandhi's philosophical background are also explained in the first chapter.

The introduction is followed by the **second chapter** which deals with the political conditions of Gandhi's time and its nature, the factors that moulded Gandhi as a political reformer such as the vegetarian society, the racial discriminations: the incidents of his own life and others life and also the civil rights movements, various influences on Gandhi from both the sides of west and east and from his family and religious influences etc. The political reforms such as nature, basis and scope of the Indian politics that are radically transformed by Gandhi. He incorporated the political techniques with moral and spiritual adaptation, religious harmony along with constructive programmes.

The **third chapter** explains about Gandhi's political philosophy. This part deals with the nature and features of the Gandhi's concepts of power, politics and state, his individual opinion on the concepts of man and his role in society, means and ends, non-violent state and its features, democracy within democracy and self-rule (Swaraj). Gandhi gave more importance to means than ends, he describes the means of Truth, Ahimsa, Satyagraha and the ends of the Swaraj, Ramarajya and Sarvodaya etc. The spiritual and moral politics of Gandhi is considered as the special futures of Gandhian philosophy.

The **fourth chapter** analyzes the concept of political decentralization basing on the philosophical ground of Gandhi. Primarily it evaluates Gandhi as a political philosopher. His political philosophy is a decentralized democracy. It is a contribution to democratic development. In this chapter I tried to highlighten Gandhian political decentralization as one of the techniques to create the new world order with equality in all aspects of life. It is possible through the individual freedom and empowerment and also through the people's participation in all kinds of Government decision making process. It would be the ongoing process of the world Government to build up self-ruled and self-reliant village panchayats. The Panchayat Raj system is known as the decentralized form of local Government. In addition to these philosophical explanations of the greatest good for all, equality and fraternity and his soundness on Indian philosophical tradition, all are critically examined here.

Finally the **fifth chapter** is a sort of conclusion: I summarized the philosophically evaluated Gandhi's political reforms and their relevance to the contemporary conditions. A politically decentralized governmental structure should be developed with moral and religious foundation. A critical analysis on Gandhi's concepts like village panchayats, federal Government, enlightend anarchy, sarvodaya was also done. At the end the possibilities of world government by applying the self-rule of the individual, village Panchayat, state or nation and their process of implementation are examined.

CHAPTER II

Gandhi: The Political Reformer

Introduction

Gandhi as a political activist strived to reform politics and also the social, economic, educational, religious aspects, empowerment of the untouchabilities and women etc. The ultimate aim of Gandhi was self-rule of the nation as well as the individual. He intended to remove the British rule from India and also he struggled to reform the political techniques and socio-economic and religious conditions of India. It is a fact that there is a close relationship between the socio-economic, religious and political fields. These fields are dependent and supportive to one another. All these facts revealed that Gandhi was simultaneously tried to reform all fields of national life. Gandhi himself considered that without self-sustenance, religious harmony, women's empowerment and equality based on caste and economics, it is not possible to achieve the self-rule of nation as well as the individual. To attain the political ends, he suggested the constructive program to reform the national life of India. As an active participant of South African movements and also a political leader of Indian national movement, he innovated the political techniques both India and also from the West.

Gandhi is both practitioner and a theorist. He was one of the reformers of social and political issues in South Africa and also in India. He was always intended to regenerate or moderate the soil based thinking of India and utilizes it for his reformation activities. He was not a prophet or saint but an ordinary man of high moral values. He went to South Africa to practice

as a barrister where he faced immoral and evil incidents in his own life and also in the life of others. These incidents changed his inner volition as a political as well as a social reformer. He was very much influenced by various religious scriptures, political and social thinkers of Indian tradition and also from the western tradition and thinkers. These influences helped him to construct various socio-political theories which shaped him as a social and political reformer. It is a fact that the socio-political condition of South Africa and India has played an important role in moulding Gandhi's personality as a reformer. South Africa, which is a colony under the British dominance, exploited the people and encouraged racial discrimination and domination over the people. Similarly, in India also due to the British dominance, there is social discrimination, political domination and exploitation which were happened in South Africa. The social and political conditions prevailed in South Africa and in India along with the ideologies of Gandhi in socio-political thought transformed him as a political reformer. As a political reformer and also as a strong believer in Indian tradition, he cultivated moral and ethical values and tried to implement the same in the field of politics. This chapter discusses about the political reforms of Gandhi. In addition to this, it also discusses about political conditions during his time. There are some factors which moulded Gandhi as a political reformer. He reshapedThe influences he experienced from India and West and also the principles, he has reshaped to utilize to the political movements and his various dimensions like the man of peace and also radical liberal. Gandhi's of spiritualized the politics.

Political Conditions During Gandhi's Period

Gandhi tried to reform the social and political scenario of South Africa as well as India. He always indented to regenerate the traditional thinking of India in order to utilize the socio-economic and political activities. Gandhi was born in a middle-class Hindu family, in the town

of Porbander. It is a small town of Gujarat state in the western coast of India. Gandhi had an arranged marriage at the age of 13 with Kasturba an 11 year-old girl. They remained married till their entire lives. In order to study Law he went to London at the age of 19 in the year 1888. He became a lawyer and came back to India after three years, and after a year of practicing law unsuccessfully, he was offered a job by an Indian businessman in South Africa. In the year 1892, at the age of 23, Gandhi travelled to South Africa, where he remained for over 20 years. In South Africa as a lawyer he faced immoral incidents in his own life and also with regard to others life. These experiences changed him as a political as well as social reformer. Moreover he had very deep influences from India and outside with regard to various religious scriptures, Indian political and social thinkers and their views and also of the western thinkers. These influences helped him to construct the theories and movements for the sake of the needy people and shaped him as a reformer of political and social fields. It is a fact that the political conditions of South Africa and India played an important role in moulding Gandhi's personality as a reformer. While he was in South Africa, critical situations were created by the British dominance. Those governments exploited the people and encourage the racial discrimination and domination over the people. In India in the same way the British made social discrimination, political domination and exploitation. Thus the political as well as the social conditions both in South Africa and India forced him as a political reformer. There are many reform theories and movements prescribed and practiced in and around the world since the moment of civilization. Due to certain reasons, the socio-economic and political conditions of one region or the country may be taken into consideration. Some may opt violent reforms and on the other hand some people follow non-violent ways to achieve the designated ends. 20th century is distinguished by the huge number of political leaders appearing on the global scene. They were national leaders

who had an exciting effect on their constituents and enjoy a degree of power and influence which was vested in their prescribed political status. The developed countries that include Winston Churchill in the United Kingdom, Germany: Adolf Hitler, the United States: Franklin Roosevelt and Charles de Gaulle of France. The Third World independent countries such as India had Mahatma Gandhi and then Nehru, Egypt had Nasser and Indonesia had Sukarno. Possibly the most dramatic materialization of attractive authority were seen in the Communist nations, e.g., Stalin of the Soviet Union, Mao Zedong of China, Kim Il Sung of North Korea and Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam. These reformers intended to change the society and always fight against the evil rule and customs. In India M.K. Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Dayanand Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Vinoba Bhave, Jyotiba Phule, Ambedkar, Baba Amte and Annie Besant strived to promote our social order during that period. Among the social reformers, Gandhi and Ambedkar played the most eminent role to reform the society as well as the political system. Gandhi as a multifaceted personality was a national leader, freedom fighter, reformer and a revolutionary also. Gandhi as a political reformer opted truth, love, non-violence, self-suffering as the basis of his political aims. Satyagraha is his eminent method to achieve the destinations. He combined ethics and religion in politics. He intended to make reforms not only in the field of politics and also in the fields of socio-economic, religious, development of the downtrodden and women.

Mahatma Gandhi has been described as a very unique personality who combined righteousness with politics. His advocacy of spiritualization of politics was not anticipated to blend politics with religion. It was rather, a passionate appeal for moralizing the culture and practice of politics. Although Gandhi's popular representation was like a statesman, who successfully used non-violence as a tool in the struggle for his political objectives i.e.,

independence for India. Gandhi was a humanist, who ventured through out his life to seek Truth as God. In the philosophical dialogue, there is affirmation of the essential harmony of all existence, the indivisibility of truth and interrelation of truth and non-violence. While the former was the end, the latter was the means to achieve the end, in all fields i.e., social, economic or political, he worked as his life's mission. Gandhi was a reformer in every field. To the protagonists of pure religion, he said that carry God to the poor in a bowl of rice rather than a bundle of high dogmas and logic. Religion provides the ethical framework for all social and political actions of Gandhi. Whether it was satyagraha; the soul force for vital political demands or his multi-faceted constructive programmes like Hindu-Muslim unity, upliftment of the oppressed classes or his emphasis on Swadeshi and Khadis, there was an fundamental spiritual advocate. Gandhi's closest colleagues and many of his critics felt that Gandhi's views were utopian and adversative to modernity. Just like the dust settles down from his historical agenda of political work, it is obvious that as a practical person he tried to strike stability between the political realities on the ground and his moral ideological pursuits.

John Adams maintained that liberty without virtue is mere license and many of us do not know, because of our selective reading of John Locke, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill all agreed with Adams. Galston makes the point well: 'There is a break between rights and rightness, it is not possible to close that without a more affluent vocabulary one that appeal to the concepts of civility, responsibility and the universal wealth, among others' (1991: 8). Contemporary liberals avoid the issue of civic virtue at their peril, but Gandhi take more seriously the ancient view that state-craft does indeed demand soul-craft of the virtue in the fields of politics, economics and society. As a political reformer he cultivated the moral values in the field of politics through the implementation of ethical principles in political activities.

Gandhi, the seeker of truth, wished to spiritualize the politics without much destruction. His spiritual and ethical principles of Truth, Love and Ahimsa are more relevant to attain the political ends to Gandhi.

When Gandhi was born there were many colonies ruled by other countries around the world. In those colonies various forms of exploitation and atrocities were practiced by the ruled countries. Few of the western countries like England, Portugal and French etc ruled over the world by the military force. So there was an uncertain situation prevailing in the world. In this condition, there were various reforms and revolutionary movements emerging in various parts of the world. At that time in India many irrational activities and customs like sati, child marriage, untouchability, regional disparities, religious domination and sexual exploitation were in practice. In addition to this, there were colonial exploitation, domination and more atrocities were practiced by the British government. After the graduation of barrister, Gandhi went to South Africa to work as a lawyer. In South Africa he has faced many humiliations and exploitation against the migrated Indians by the ruling government and society. Like India, South Africa was a part of the British Empire. Since the beginning of 19th century, the control was passed to Holland. The British settlers began immigrating about 1820, joining some Dutch farmers who continued to live there. Those farmers were called 'Boers'. A social system with a network of rules based on race became firmly entrenched. Europeans (whites) were on one level. A lower tier including whoever non whites those people were called as 'colored'. This included native people (blacks) and the settlers from Gandhi's motherland in Asia called as 'coolies' by whites. During the period of Gandhi's stay in South Africa, the migrated Indians had no legal rights. The European colonialists did not consider Indians to be full human beings and referred to them as 'coolies'. After Gandhi emerged as a leader of the Indian society, he developed a political

movement within a year based on the methods of non-violent civil disobedience, which he called 'satyagraha'.

Thus Gandhi fought against discrimination of the Indians. He used non-violence as an approach, encouraging his followers to defy the anti-Asian laws. He told South African officials that he would go to jail or die before recognizing those laws. He also organized strikes, demonstrations, hartals and protest marches containing thousands of supporters. Gandhi was arrested and imprisoned many times along with many of his followers. He suggested the simple clothes of Hindu culture: plain, loose-fitting and wrap-around robes. This illustrated the non-cooperation of the British government while it created an image to bring him closer to the people. During his stay in South Africa, Gandhi successfully fetched some rights for Indians. A few laws were changed and there was some enhancement in their treatment. In particular, the Indian Relief Act of 1914 was a concession because of the pressure from Gandhi and his followers.

Around 1905, Gandhi came back to the Indian way of life from the Western life style. The rest of his life he went behind the time-honored Hindu teaching of austerity and self-denial until his death. He used to dress simply, in a loin cloth and shawl and had no other material property. At the age of 46, in the year 1915 Gandhi came back to India, where he spent a year travelling widely and then in the following years, helping to resolve many local problems. At that time Gandhi became the guiding force behind a strong nationalist movement that encouraged independence from the British government. Before his emergence as a political leader, the national movement has started; Thilak and Gokle were leading the movements before him. Gandhi was the most important Indian political and spiritual leader of the 20th century. His success leads to admire all over the country, so much so that India's most distinguished writer

Rabindranath Tagore, gave Gandhi the title Mahatma (Great Soul). However Gandhi rejected the honour. Within Hindu culture, he was called as 'Mahatma' with enormous respect. By the time Gandhi was born, India was a widely diversified region. India as the British colony, combined with more than 500 different native states that is, kingdoms and municipalities. Even Gandhi himself was born in one of the states of Kathiawad. The native states have certain degree of local autonomy in its region, but the country as a whole was extremely controlled by strict British authority. Soon after his return to India, Gandhi started working for the independence of India. Gandhi's influence was so great that his truthful non-violent methods were later taken to practice around world by many political activists, such as Martin Luther King Jr, American civil rights activist and leader, Nelson Mandela the president of South Africa and so on. Gandhi called upon Indians to stop cooperating with the British on the occasion of non-cooperation movement led by him from 1920-1922 to attain self-reliant, self-rule from British organization. Gandhi imprisoned by the British government in 1922. Due to his ill health, Gandhi was released in 1925 but he was imprisoned several times in his life time. He became a social reformer, working determinedly to improve Hindu-Muslim relations, as he slowly led his country into independence. In the process of independence movement, he started many newspapers which he used to further his ideals. In a limited arena Gandhi is one of the foremost figures in the history of Indian journalism. He found morally a good technique of satyagraha that he used in national movements, stressing passive resistance, non-violent disobedience, boycotts and occasionally hunger strikes. He became well-known and respected that he gained influence with both the general public and the British rulers. For example, in 1939 by observing fasting and satyagraha, Gandhi was able to oblige several states, that were ruled by princes to grant democratic reforms. Not only he unified the diverse elements of the Indian National Congress, he was able to force the political concessions from the

British by intimidating to fast until death. After II World War, Gandhi was involved in the discussions that lead to India's independence. The same discussions however, also lead to partition of India into two countries: modern-day India (primarily for Hindus) and Pakistan (for Muslims). When Gandhi strongly opposed this partition, there were lot of quarrels happening around India, which ultimately resulted in the death of about one million people and the dislocation of over eleven million people. Gandhi was assassinated at the age of 78 just after India attained its independence from Britain on 30th January 1948. The killer was a Hindu extremist, working as a part of conspiracy that blamed Gandhi for the separation of the country. While Gandhi was a man of faith, he did not found a house of worship, nor did he create any specific system of belief for his followers. Gandhi believed in the unity of all humankind under one god and preached Hindu, Muslim and Christian ethics. As a youth, he was neither an intelligent nor a child prodigy. Indeed, he suffered from tremendous shyness. However, he approached life as a very long series of small steps towards his goals, which he pursued insisntently. By the time he died, India became an independent nation free from British rule. In fact India is one of the largest democracies in the world, comprises of mostly Hindus with an extensive and Muslim minority. Today Gandhi is memorized not only as a political leader, but as a great moralist who appealed to the universal conscience of mankind. As such, he changed the world.

Most of the Marxist's opposed Gandhian philosophy and advocated violence over turning of society by the masses and the establishment of a state based on Marxist doctrine. Gandhi opposed violence in general, especially as a means of bringing about political change. According to Gandhi, non-violence and civil disobedience are the acceptable methods of attaining freedom and peaceful new social order. He thought that satyagraha and its methods is the only reasonable

means to attain true Swaraj: the real self-rule. This did not mean that mere ousting of the British imperialists from India but that Indians, through Gandhi's methods, would first learn how to master themselves. This was the intention of the 'Constructive Program' as anticipated by Gandhi in the 1920's, to help the Indian people in attaining freedom by first creating "an ambiance of perfect calm", unity among all Indians and to give up foreign cloth by producing their own. It was through this program Gandhi thought that people could learn how to rule themselves as individuals. To sum up -Inward freedom must come before outward freedom. To Gandhi Swaraj was greater than political, economic and social independence, it was a continuous movement of spiritual deliverance and self-purification. This elucidates why Gandhi called for non-violent protest although many others employed violence. If India was to attain freedom without violence and coercion that is how India would govern herself once the British are left.

Factors that Moulded Gandhi as a Political Reformer

Gandhi was not a saint or prophet or philosopher in the actual sense. He was a mediocre student in his school life and committed bad actions in his early life, he got child marriage and he was striving to dominate over his wife in his early family life. Though there are some of the factors like his study of religious and other texts, the influences and some specific incidents moulded Gandhi as a highly ethical personality, political, social reformer and also as a leader. He has experienced various racial discriminations, atrocities, oppressions and exploitations in his own life and he has witnessed when others affected at London, South Africa and in India. He strived against the social and irrational customs of India like child marriage, sati and untouchability, etc.

Vegetarian Society

Gandhi went to University College, London to study law and also to undergo training as a barrister at the age of 18 on 4th September 1888. His friends compelled him to join the

Vegetarian Society, at the same time he strictly followed the vow of vegetarianism as per the promise given to his mother. Later on he was elected to its administrative committee and established a local chapter. In the later period it was credited as a valuable experience to him in organizing institutions. This experience had been helpful to him in organizing the political movements in South Africa and also in India.

Racial Discriminations

The incident in the year 1893 that put Gandhi focused about his role. While he was on a legal assignment in South Africa, Gandhi faced discrimination directed towards Indians. Initially, he was thrown out of a train at Pietermaritzburg after refusing to move from the first class compartment to the third class coach even though he was holding a valid first class ticket. After that while he was further travelled by carriage, the driver had beaten him for repudiating to travel on the foot board to make room for a European traveller. He suffered other hardships in the journey as well, including being banned from several hotels. There were several parallel events like he was ordered by the magistrate of a Durban court to remove his turban for which Gandhi refused. These incidents seem to be as a turning point in his life, play the role of awaken the social injustice and social activism. By witnessing direct racism; discrimination and unfairness in opposition to Indians in South Africa Gandhi started questioning his people's status within the British Empire and his own place in the society. These experiences triggered his lifelong commitment to the civil rights and also to the improvement of the lives of those with little political voice.

Civil Rights

Gandhi extended his period of stay in South Africa due to the request of the South African Indians to protest against the bill that denies them the right to vote. Gandhi accepted with few conditions and he explained the situation in the meeting and dispatched a telegram to the Speaker of the Assembly requesting him to postpone further discussion of the Bill. Simultaneously a similar telegram was sent to the Premier, Sir John Robinson and another to Mr. Escombe, a friend of Dada Abdulla's. The Speaker promptly replied that, the discussion of the Bill would be postponed for two days. Though he was unable to halt the bill's passage, his campaign was successful in drawing attention to the grievances of Indians in South Africa. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and through this organization he moulded the Indian community of South Africa into a homogeneous political force.

The new Act compels the registration of the colony's Indian population in 1906, propagated by the Transvaal government. In the same year September 11th Gandhi espoused his ever growing methodology of satyagraha or non-violent protest, for the first time, calling on his fellow Indians to defy the new law and suffer the punishments for doing so, rather than resist through violent means in the mass protest meeting that held in the Johannesburg. Afterwards he adopted the plan of satyagraha which was leading to a seven-year struggle. In this struggle, Indians were striking, rejecting to register, burning their registration cards or engaging in other forms of non-violent struggles, consequently including Gandhi thousands of Indians were jailed, flogged or even shot. While the government was successful in repressing the Indian protesters, the public outcry stemming from the harsh methods employed by the South African government in the face of peaceful Indian protesters finally forced South African General Jan Christiaan

Smuts to negotiate for compromise with Gandhi. Gandhi's ideas took shape and the concept of Satyagraha was nurtured during this struggle. The Rowlatt Acts of 1919 was another important factor to mould Gandhi as a political reformer. This act set laws that allowed the government to try people accused of political crimes without a jury. To oppose this act Gandhi called for a general strike (hartal) throughout the country. But he called it off when violence occurred against Britishers. Following the Amritsar Massacre of four hundred Indians, Gandhi responded not by cooperating with British courts, stores and schools. Finally the government agreed to make reforms.

Influences on Gandhi

Before I am going to explain the various influences on Gandhi, I would like to say that Gandhi is an average man like any other Indians. He is not a prophet or a saint and did not have any extra senses. He was a mediocre in his early life. In his early life he also committed some immoral or bad actions, later he has corrected himself. There are the influences of his father, mother, neighbors and the scriptures of Hinduism. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism and his study on the thinkers like Socrates, Emerson, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau etc.

Ancestral Influences

His family was the first and foremost influence that makes him as a political reformer. He learnt a lot from His father Kaba Gandhi 'his rich experience of practical affairs' this helped him to solve many complicated problems of political and social life. His father's influence shaped him as a practical idealist. Hence he said, 'I am not a visionary, I claim to be a practical idealist. Thus his father's life and ideas cast a considerable influence in Gandhi's works and ideas in both social and political arenas. Putlibai, the mother of Mahatma Gandhi has left very much influence

on Gandhi. He said she was profound religious believer. She never takes her food without paying daily prayers. She would take the hardest of vows and keep them without flinching. Illness was no excuse for relaxing them. Saintliness is derived from the great impression of my mother. He got his mother's permission to go to England for studies by taking an oath: 'I vowed not to touch wine, women and meat. These three vows shielded him throughout his stay in England. Kasturba, the wife of Gandhi and married at the age of thirteen. But he lost no time in assuming the authority of husband to lord over her life. However as the years passed, she became his active partner and supporter in all his activities. She was a devoted wife who was contented to live in the shadow of her memorable husband. She had many sided personality. She was fiercely independent woman. Kasturba became Ba-mother of all who took care of Gandhi's comprehensive family. Gandhi said at the end of my life I felt her as my 'teacher' in non-violence. She was his living 'model' of Satyagraha: Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand and her quiet submission to my futility on the other hand, eventually made me mortified of myself. What I did in South Africa was an extension of the rule of Satyagraha that she strictly followed in her life. Gandhi learnt much from Kasturba and perhaps even more from his mother.

Indian Political Leaders

India has seen many political and social reformers. Among them Gopala Krishna Gokhale first introduced the principle of religion to public life, that means to the political life. He tried to spiritualize it. Gandhi was much influenced by him and accepted him as his political Guru. Gandhi said "my conception of a Guru is perhaps not of the ordinary. Nothing but perfection will satisfy me. I am in search of one though he is in the flesh, is incorruptible and unmoved by passion, free from the pairs of opposites, who is truth and Ahimsa incarnate and will therefore

fear none and be feared by none.”²⁷ The other great Indian political leaders who stimulated the Gandhi’s young mind was Sir Pherozeshah and Lokmanya Tilak. Gandhi said that, “Sir Pherozeshah had seemed to me like the Himalaya, the Lokamanya like the ocean. But Gokhale was as the Ganges. One could have a refreshing bath in the holy river. The Himalaya was unscalable, and one could not easily launch forth on the sea. But Gangesh invited one to its bosom.”²⁸

Indian Philosophy and Religion

Indian philosophy left much influence on Gandhi in cultivating his principles to reform the political and socio-economic conditions of India and South Africa. The life and teachings of Gautama Buddha greatly influenced on Gandhi’s life and his thoughts. His preachings and series of actions in respect of ethical life as a path of the self-realization, movements towards the eradication of caste conflicts, sacraments, doctrines, cosmic view of salvation as against one’s own salvation are the reminiscent of the famous teachings of Gautama Buddha. The Vedantic – Buddhist concept of Sarvabhutahita or the good of all living beings deeply influenced on Gandhi’s philosophy of Sarvodaya- the good of all. The eightfold path of Buddhism was suggested by Gandhi for the realization of human beings. The synthesis of Vaisanava with Jaina and Buddhist views Gandhi gave new and wide connotation to Ahimsa as a valuable technique for the social reformation. He emphasized non-attachment (ana-sakti) with the influence of Jainism and the interpretation of the Gita: its concept of Niskamakarma which says that the action should be devoid of desire on fruit. Jaina doctrine of assravasamvaranirjara is akin to his emphasis on non-attachment. As a result of deep impact of the Indian Philosophy, Mahatma

²⁷. Sen, N. B., *Wit and Wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1960, p.115.

²⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *An Autobiography, or The Story of y Experiments with Truth*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1927, p. 319.

Gandhi involved in freedom struggle. He was better known as Mahatma as he represented a complete accord between his thought, word and deed and moral, spiritual values against the forces of barbarism. One finds in him a pleasant merge of saintliness and statesmanship which aroused unprompted response and respect in his long career as a social reformer, a political leader, a saint, a true lover of humanity, an apostle of peace and non-violence. Gandhi was a fine product of Indian culture, he was nurtured and continued by the recurrent inspiration of Indian Philosophy. It was the confluence of all that it is best in Indian thought from the Vedic age to modern Indian revitalization.

Buddhism

He was highly impressed by the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha. His preachings and series of actions viz. ethical life as a path of salvation, movement against caste, sacraments, dogmas, cosmic view of salvation as against one's own salvation etc. are reminiscent of the famous teachings of Gautama Buddha. His Sarvodaya has its roots in the blending of the teaching of Vedantic Buddhist concept of Sarvabhutahita or the good of all living beings. Like Buddha he believed that everyone has to be converted into a colleague. Buddha's famous saying hatred is never eliminated by counter hatred but only by love. Gandhi endorses the eight-fold path of Buddhism for the salvation of mankind. He gave new and wide connotations to Ahimsa as a synthesis of Vaisnava with Jaina – Buddhist view. He has been rightly called the apostle of Ahimsa. Buddhism teaches Gandhiji's egoless bliss of service to our fellow beings.

Jainism

Jainism is one of the Indian schools of philosophy that preached Non-Violence (Ahimsa). Gandhi concluded it as a moral virtue of human beings and practiced in the socio-economic and

political life of the society. His understanding on non-violence has the extreme touch of Jainism. Regarding the question of non- violence and its value, practical possibilities and relevance there is no difference of opinion between Gandhi and Jainism. It has been the source of inspiration from the individual level to the collective level and thereby changing its traditional value. He himself has stated that he derived much benefit from the Jaina Religious works. Dr. R.N. Dandekar, the top most Vedic Scholar and well known orientalist has observed as follows: “I sometimes think that if Gandhiji had not become involved in politics, he would have become a Jaina Muni. Incidentally, I may mention that in Europe and America, I have met several educated persons who actually believed that Gandhiji was a Jaina. He also expressed that Jainism influenced Gandhi and emphasized on non-attachment (ana-sakti) in the interpretation of the Gita. Jaina doctrine of asrava samvara nirjara is akin to his emphasis on the non-attachment rather than disinterestedness (niskamatva). The word Sarvodaya which has been traced to a Jaina work towards the society of the middle ages has given more connotations by him. He represented the Jaina ideal of Sambara, the Buddhist ideal of Nirodha. Tilak hold that Gandhi was a Jaina on account of his extreme insistence on Ahimsa and fasting for a long time”.²⁹

Gandhi read very little in the realm of political theory or political thought. But wherever he read, he assimilated perfectly. Gandhi often called himself a ‘sanathan’ Hindu, a Vedantist. Throughout his life, he was under the influence of Gita. To quote him, “My notions were an outcome of a study of the Gita, Ramayana, Mahabaratha, Upanishads, etc.”³⁰ It is in Hinduism that he lived, breathed and derived mental nourishment. Yet, he had tolerance for all faiths. For him, true religion means good thought and good conduct. Gandhian theory of ethical absolutism

²⁹ <http://www.vpmthane.org/Publicationssample/IndianPhilosophyItsRelevanceinthe21stCentury/Dr.TabasumSheikh.pdf>.

³⁰ Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 03.10.1936, p. 265.

can be traced in the vedic concept of Rta- the doctrine that encompassing cosmic and moral ordinance which govern both men and gods. He read the Bhavatgita and gave a novel interpretation to it. He read it several times and considered it as the book of spiritual reference. He learnt about truth and non-violence from the Bhavatgita. He was also influenced by Patanjali Yogasutra, the Ramayana and Mahabharatha. He read some of the Jain and Buddhist writings and was deeply influenced by the principles of truth and non-violence. From Upanishads, he got the inspiration for his faith in non-possession. He read the New Testament of the Bible and was greatly influenced by the 'sermon of the mount'. The dying words of Jesus –father forgive them for they know not what they do, awakened Gandhi's faith in the rightness and also the value of satyagraha.

Hinduism

Gandhi personified himself with the highest ideals of ancient Indian civilization. He was influenced by the religion of Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Jainism and Buddhism. Mahatma Gandhi drew inspiration from the Gita, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Tulasi Ramayana and also from the lives of Saints and Acharyas. He dedicated time to learn 'Shantiparva' in which Bhishma spoke to Yudishthira on Indian ethics in all its features. His understanding of the Gita is an epoch making one in Indian thinking and made him to observe non-attachment, detachment or abandonment. Through these studies he found a new way of life that unites the two principles of activism (karmayoga) for the sake of harmony of society (loksangraha) and of renunciation (sanyasa) and also for individual deliverance. The attitude of respect for all religions was his basic policy. He preached equality of all religions. He was non-dogmatic, catholic and secular in thought, word and deed. Harishchandra, Prahlada, Rama, Yudhisthira, Mira and Narsi Mehta (Vaishnava Janata) have influenced his life and thought.

Gandhi accepts the cardinal concept of patanjali Yogasutra and believed in its aphorism that, in the presence of non-violence hatred will cease. He translated every word of Narsimha Mehta's code of ethics. The Isopanished says that life will depends on work and the way opted to work. It is everything that falls on one's task or detached spirit. The same teaching is emphasized by the Gita. Gandhiji wrote in Young India "I lost my earthly mother, who gave me birth long ago but this eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me when I am in complexity or suffering, and I seek refuge in her bosom. I can proclaim that the Gita is ever presenting me with new teachings, and if somebody tells me that it my delusion, my reply to him would be I should hug this decision as my richest treasure"³¹. Gita is Gandhi's Shastra. He acted according to the injunction work, detachment, prayer and surrender to the will of God. It is not a mere scripture but a bonfire to an ultimate refuge, mercy and manifesto to all on gracing mother divine.

Anasakti Yoga

Gandhi's interpretation of the Gita is an epoch- making one in Indian thinking. In anasaktiyoga he observed the following points like non-attachment, detachment or renunciation. It has been teaching a new way of life, in which the ideals of activism (karmayoga) for the sake of the solidarity of society (loksangrah) and of renunciation (sanyansa) by personal salvation these two join together. It also teaches the ability of doing an act without being involved in the results (Yogah Karmasu Kausalam). Gandhi highlighted the meaning of non-attachment or renunciation. I am quoting some of his utterances.

³¹. John Moniz, *Liberated Society: Gandhian and Christian Vision*, Roma: Comparative Study, 1996, p. 123.

1. Anasakti means the renunciation and moves towards the planets of devotion, knowledge and work that the individual good merges with the common good.
2. Anaskati is Ahimsa. He remarks 'After 40 years of unremitting endeavour, I feel perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observation of Ahimsa in every shape and form'. Anasakti is the coin of Ahimsa and Satya are the obverse and reverse side of the same coin.
3. Anasakti consists of these points.
 - A) Desire less action
 - B) Dedication of all actions to God and
 - C) Surrendering oneself to God, that is by surrendering oneself to his body & soul.

Interpretation of Gita

Mahatma Gandhi advances arguments concerning the Mahabharata as symbolic rather than historical in view of the sub-humans or super human's derivation of the figures, attributing fantasy characters and dialogues to historical persons for theoretical effects. Pandavas were symbolized the powers of light, kauravas were the powers of darkness in the battleground. Arjuna represents higher impulses and struggles against evil. Arjuna and Krishna symbolically represented the individual's ego and the great In-dweller. Niskhkama Karma (selfless service) is the guiding star that makes him to realize and the wellbeing. Just as every drop of rainwater flows ultimately to the ocean, very tear of his sweat should finally flow into the reservoir of common good, love, truth, compassion, protection and worldly prosperity that lights the path of his duty. The Gita ideal of karma yoga and sthitaprajana is the dynamic altruism (religious bans

of politics) that he wanted to make the basis of transformed social and political action. It teaches disinterested action for the realization of God. His concept of Sarvodaya and socialism has its foundation in the vedantic concept of the spiritual unity of existence and the Gita-Buddhistic concept of the good of all living beings. The emphasis on co-operative life, progressive views of citizenship, equal dignity and sacredness of all works that falls to one's lot, are best for one's life. These ideals are already found in the Vedas, Upanishads and classical philosophies of India. The cultural tradition of India is based on the Vedic concept of Unity and the Gita-Buddhist concept of good of all living beings. The terms in Gita and the Upanishads like karma yoga, kama dhenu yoga, tapasaya and janana yoga have also been considered by him along with Tilak and Aurobindo's views.

Influences from Western Thinkers

The Western thinkers like Socrates, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Confucius left much influence on Gandhian political and social philosophy. About Socrates, Gandhi quotes, "Many men were opposed to the morality which Socrates, observed in this day"³². Gandhi recommended the 'Defence and Death' of Socrates as a follow up study of Hindu Swaraj. Gandhi was much influenced by Emerson's philosophy that he could not help in propagating it. The impression that Emerson's philosophy carved on young Gandhi's mind found maturity and manifold expression on different occasions in his middle age and continued to inspire him till the last days of his life. The teachings of Lao-Tse and Confucius also influenced Gandhi's thought to some extent. Lao-Tse has taught the philosophy of non-assertiveness of ideal life. From the writings of Confucius, Gandhi learnt the principles of reciprocity. This principle means that men should not do to others what they would not have done to themselves.

³². Gandhi, M. K., *Ethical Religion*, p.16.

Gandhi learnt the principle of civil disobedience from Thoreau. Ruskin was instilled in Gandhi in respect of manual labour. Tolstoy inspired him to think in terms of philosophical anarchism. Pyarelal says that by comparing Thoreau and Gandhi, neither of these thinkers were system builders but both were profound thinkers, truth seekers and truth speakers. Both had a passion for truth and both represented a philosophy in action. Both also believed in the ideal of voluntary poverty. In his autobiography, Gandhi remembered Tolstoy as one of the three models who influenced him by his books, especially 'the Kingdom of god is within you'. The profound morality, truthfulness independent thinking overwhelmed him and left an abiding impression on his mind. Gandhi and Tolstoy had much in common. Tolstoy prescribed as well as practiced non-violence, non-killing, manual or bread labour, non-possession and minimum needs. Although he revered and followed by Tolstoy, he was not a Tolstoyan. Gandhi seized the essential and noble ideas from different eastern and western sources and assimilated all into a system which is undoubtedly of his own. Among the western thinkers, who had a deep and lasting influence upon Gandhi's personality were Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau.

Influence of Tolstoy

Gandhi's association with the Tolstoyan philosophy was spread over a long period. As a member of the vegetarian society in London, he was familiar with Tolstoy's name, but it was his book, 'The kingdom of God is within You' that impressed him most, whom he had read that book, he felt he had learnt more from it than from other books which his friends had given him. The main concept of the book Gandhi perceived, was the core of the Christian gospel which was passive resistance of wickedness. This seemed to come so close to the Jain doctrine of ahimsa and Gandhi embraced it with open arms. Gandhi became a passionate reader at the other works at Tolstoy like, 'Gospels in Brief', 'What to do', 'The First step', 'How shall we Escape' and the

‘Slavery of our Times.’ He found a basic Idea, common to all works that a true Christian is one who eschews violence, avoids conflicts with his neighbor, gains freedom for himself and helps to liberalize the world. Pyarelal is of the view that Gandhi’s reading at Tolstoy’s writings had given “a definite social coloring to his religious thought”³³ Gandhi entered in to personal association with Tolstoy and the two became life-long friends.

The idea of Satyagraha was sown in Gandhi’s mind when he grasped the Tolstoyan philosophy that an oppressor’s efforts will be in vain if the exploited repudiate to propose to the tyranny. Tolstoy had no opportunity to transform this idea but it was rested by Gandhi, first in South Africa and then on a grand scale in India. Gandhi was the first man in the history who united thought and action, ideas and practice, means and ends into a continuous process at revolution. Gandhi was a renowned and truthful admirer of Tolstoy, for it was he who put into practice the master’s idea of non-violence and universal love. His compliment to Tolstoy was issued during the century festivity of this Great Russian. He said: “Tolstoy was the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has preceded. No one in the west, before him or since, has written and spoken as he... true ahimsa should mean complete freedom from ill-will and anger and over-flowing love for all. For inculcating this true and higher type of ahimsa amongst us. Tolstoy’s life with its ocean-like love should serve as a beacon light and never-falling source of inspiration.”³⁴

Influence of Ruskin

Another great writer who had a part in shaping Gandhi’s thinking was John Ruskin (1819-1900). Ruskin’s ‘Unto this Last’ was the single book that shattered and recast the whole priorities of

³³. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Discovery of Satyagraha on the Threshold*, Vol.II, Bombay: Sevak Prakashan, 1980. P. 171.

³⁴. BhaBani Battacharya, *Gandhi The Writer*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1969, p.72.

Gandhian life. It made a revolutionary impact on his mind during the overnight train journey. He came across this book by chance; it was given to him by his vegetarian friend, Henry Polka. Gandhi was awestruck by the book and finished reading in a single sitting. He described the spell as magical. He firmly decided to organize his life in accordance with the idea to set forth in the book. It became practically a blue print for what he wished to do. That's why it left much power over him and led him towards entirely new order of life.

The book 'Unto this Last' was translated into Gujarat in under the heading of Sarvodaya which literally means the 'welfare of all'. Explained his indebtedness to Ruskin, Gandhi wrote the teachings of 'Unto this Last' that understood to be:

1. That the Good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life as labour, i.e. the life of the tiller of the soil and handicrafts man is worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had faintly understood, the third had never occurred to me I arose with the dawn ready to reduce these principles to practice. Gandhi took a firm decision to change his life style in accordance with the ideal presented by Ruskin after reading the book of 'Unto this Last'. Gandhi's ultimate goal was the welfare of the individual based on the individual based on the individual worth of every man. To achieve this goal he postulated a technique of direct action with the unique provision of means to achieve the end. Gandhi wrote: "If mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and brotherhood it

must adopt and act on the principle of ‘unto This Last’ a book written with blood and tears.”³⁵ The continuous synthesis of thought and conduct is the essence of his philosophy, objective, deed and of harmony attained between words, beliefs and works. Gandhi has proved that man can become an integrated personality by constant striving with pure peace in the depth of his being.

Gandhi, however, did not accept the ideas of Ruskin. In Ruskin’s scheme of things, the ordinary toiling masses had no place and he never considers them as ends. But Gandhi recognized the power of the common man and placed the means before him. Gandhi visualized the set of economic principles that supported his own concept of Ashram organization where each one received according to his needs just like Ruskin’s principles. The phoenix settlement founded in 1904, was an experiment to translate the economic principles of Ruskin into active living reality. Gandhi lived with the co-workers as the members of his own family in a farm where everyone laboured, drawing the same living wages and attending the work. Later he used to say that the phoenix settlement transformed him overnight from a city lawyer living in luxury in Durban into a poor rustic farmer living away from the city. Thus it marked the first decisive step in his progress towards the doctrine of voluntary action of non-possession to achieve the required end. Thus the teachings of Ruskin touched in depth of Gandhi’s heart and made a revolutionary impact on his mind. His greatness lies on the fact that he accepted Ruskin’s ideas, expanded them and made them applicable on a universal basis. His techniques were not of local importance, but of universal relevance. Thus he created a new ethos, a new way of life.

³⁵. *ibid*, p. 35.

Influences of Thoreau

Another great western thinker who had influenced Gandhi was Henry David Thoreau. Though Gandhi had never visited America, the 19th century transcendentalist- Thoreau- exercised a powerful influence in making his thought, Thoreau himself was a man who preached what he practiced. He was a great writer, philosopher, poet and above all, a practical man who thought nothing which he did not practice himself. Gandhi shows his indebtedness to Thoreau in these words: “you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essays on the ‘Duty of civil Disobedience’ scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa.”³⁶ Gandhi read about Thoreau during a crucial stage of his life when he was fighting in South Africa. He wrote that Thoreau’s essays contained “the essence of his political philosophy not only as India’s struggle related to the British but as to his own views of the relation of citizens to government.”³⁷ Gandhi owed his concept of civil disobedience to Thoreau. In Indian freedom struggle the expression Civil Disobedience became a motto under Gandhi’s leadership. Thoreau’s essays on the Duty of Civil Disobedience and life principles impressed him so greatly that he termed their emphasis as inner voice. Following the footsteps of Thoreau, Gandhi defined the laws and adopted Civil Disobedience towards unjust authority. Like Thoreau Gandhi passionately first believed in the individual and that is why more importance was given to the individual. That is to say “Thoreau’s revolt was one man’s affair while Gandhi’s was a mass movement. Both believed in the change of heart of the opponent. Gandhi shared the trials and tribulations of the common man, gave a unique and incomparable lead to the masses inspired by a common purpose. Both Gandhi and Thoreau were basically seekers of truth who had lived

³⁶. Tendulkar, D. G., *Mahatma Gandhi*, Bombay: Vitthalbhai K. Jhaveri and Tendulkar, 1953, Vol. 6, p. 177.

³⁷. Ramachandran, G. and Mahadevan, T.K., (eds.), *Quest for Gandhi*, New Delhi: Gandhi Peace foundation, 1970, p.173.

according to their convictions.”³⁸ Though Gandhi was very much influenced by the western thinkers, he re-shaped their ideas within himself evolving an idiom of his own. He did not blindly imitate the westerners; instead he tried to take what was good in their teachings and adapted them to Indian conditions.

Gandhi’s Reforms

Gandhi as a multidimensional personality worked in all fields of social life for the welfare of all. He strived to reform the socio-economic, political and religious lives of the people. There were numerous evils in practice in the name of domination and exploitation like Untouchability, women’s depression, male domination, caste, purdah, dowry, religious discrimination, political power concentration and prohibitions to lower caste and poor to participate in the politics of the country, economic concentration and restriction for holding land and other things to the lower caste people, banned from temple entry to certain group of people and education for women and lower caste etc. His reform activities of the social and politics are inter-linked and supportive to each other. He said that “My work of social reform was in on way less or subordinate to political work. The fact is that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work.”³⁹ In addition to this he said that “The two things-the social reordering and the fight for political swaraj-must go hand in hand.”⁴⁰ He was very much understood that social reforms are not possible without the political

³⁸. Natesan, *Gandhi and Thoreau*, Gandhi Marg, Vol, 2, No. 23, 1958, p. 218.

³⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 06.08.1931, p.203.

⁴⁰. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Selections From Gandhi*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1948, p. 131.

enlightenment and the social reformation of the country is necessary condition to achieve the political goals.

The starting place of reform to Gandhi was the individual's mind. It is the process of moving towards the individual to society. First the individual's mind must be purified through ethical teachings of truth, non-violence, chastity, non-possession, control of palate, non-stealing, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, bread labour, equality of religions and swadeshi. Gandhi reformed the concept of self-realization as the social realization in other words the purification of our society through the moral enrichments of the individuals. In this context Nirmala Singh says that "Gandhi broke the Indian tradition of choosing only one line of salvation i.e., renunciation. He was against the idea of becoming a saint or a yogi amidst grinding poverty. Individual moksha that is against the service of the masses"⁴¹ Gandhian philosophy of self-realization attached with social service are integrally connected in the process of greatest good of all in the sarvodaya social order. To him sarvodaya is a classless and casteless society that means "A casteless and classless society would mean a society where men and women lived together without any social and economic inequality. This idea when expressed in a positive way would mean Sarvodaya or the prosperity of all without any distinction of rich and poor or high and low. The same word when applied to an individual would mean the balanced development of all the capabilities of men and women."⁴² Indians are diversified in many of the bases country Gandhi wanted to make the unity of all. He suggested the philosophy of Sarvodaya, it is ever inclusive for the all round development of all.

⁴¹. Nirmala Singh, *Non-Violence and Satyagraha in Gandhian Philosophy*, Patna: Janki Prakashan, 1997, p. 14.

⁴². *ibid*, p. 14.

Gandhi's Political Reforms

Gandhi made many more reforms in India, especially in field of politics he made crucial reforms. Initially he changed the basic, nature and scope of Indian politics. Subsequently he reformed the means accustomed to the Indian conditions from our traditional and cultural thoughts. He spiritualized the politics by using ethical and religious principles. "The essential problem is to relate changes in Gandhi's life to changes in the nature and tempo of nationalist politics."⁴³ In addition to these, there was a new approach and method in his political campaigns and activities.

Meaning of Political power

Gandhi started his political reforms from the meaning and nature of political power. Aristotle defines politics as the science of the state. According to Heinz Eulau, "The behavioural persuasion in politics is concerned with what man does politically and the meaning he attaches to his behaviour."⁴⁴ According to Max weber politics as "striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups with in state."⁴⁵ But for Gandhi which is one of the way to attain his social-economic and political needs. He says that "To me political power is not an end but one of means of enabling people to better their condition in every department life."⁴⁶ According to Gandhi, political power is the best means to reform the society, through that he strived to empower the marginalized people like women, dalits and untouchables. That is why he suggested panchayat raj and decentralization as political and economic powers.

⁴³. Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922*, New York: Combridge University Press, 1972, p. XIV.

⁴⁴. Heinz Eulau, *The Behavioural Persuasion in Politics*, New York: Random House, 1963, p. 5.

⁴⁵. Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* in A. Pizzorno (ed.), *Political Sociology*, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971, p. 28.

⁴⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.07.1931. p. 162.

Basis of Indian Politics

Generally for any activity, there should be certain basis. In the same way Gandhi's politics and his goals on political activities were based on the welfare of all. It means for the sake of each and every one. The political situation of India before him was just opposite. There were Indian political movements and Congress party lead and headed by the few of the upper and middle educated class people. "In 1915 nationalist politics were essentially the preserve of a few high caste, western educated Hindus whose political techniques were as restricted as their demands and the range of their audience. By 1922 many of these restrictions had disappeared-in the number and character of the participants, the demands made and the techniques employed."⁴⁷ After the entry of Gandhi into Indian politics, the public participated in the national freedom movement and membership of the Congress party is increased. He declared in his own words like "The Congress represents the whole of India. The Congress from its very inception has not been of any particular groove or any particular colour or caste or of any particular province. Ever since its birth, it represents the whole nation and on your behalf I have made the claim that you represent not only the registered members of the Congress but the entire nation."⁴⁸ To ensure the people's participation in Indian politics, he raised the voice to empower the women, untouchables and downtrodden. He travelled throughout India and mingled with people. He always encouraged women community to take part in public life and he said that "Today few women take part in politics and most of these do not independent thinking. They are content to carry out their parents or their husbands behests. Realizing their dependence, they cry out for women's rights. Instead of doing this, however, women worker should enroll women as voters, import or have import or have imported to them practical education, teach them to think

⁴⁷. Judith M. Brown, *op.cit.*, p. XIV.

⁴⁸. Nirmal Kumar Bose, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them, so as to bring about a change in them which will compel men to realize women's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour."⁴⁹ Besides the political activities and freedom movements Gandhi showed more concern on the Harijans empowerment. He visited Harijan villages and suggested education to them. He said that "The question of primary education is in many respects much more difficult than secondary and college education. And Harijan education is the most difficult of all. Be it in the crudest manner possible, a non-Harijan child receives some home culture. A Harijan child, being shunned by society has none. Even when therefore, all primary schools are open to Harijan children, as they must be soon or late, and, in my opinion, sooner rather than later, preliminary schools will be needed for Harijan children, if they are not to labor under a perpetual handicap. This preliminary training can be discovered and tried in all the numerous Harijan schools conducted under the aegis of Harijan sevak sanghs scattered throughout India. That preliminary training should consists in teaching Harijan children manners, good speech and good conduct. A Harijan child sits anyhow, dress anyhow; his eyes, ears, teeth, hair, nails, nose are often full of dirt; many never know what it is to have a wash. I remember what I did when in 1915 I picked up a Harijan boy at Tranquebar and took him with me to Kocharb where the Ashram was then situated. I had him shaved. He was then thoroughly washed and given a simple dhoti, vest, and a cap. In a few minutes, in appearance he became indistinguishable from any child from a cultured home. His head, eyes, nose were thoroughly cleaned. His nails, which had become repositories of dirt, were pared and cleaned. His feet, which were laden with dust, were rubbed and cleaned out. Such a process has to be gone through every day, if need be, with Harijan children attending schools. Their lesson should being for the first three months with

⁴⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 21.04.1946, p. 96.

teaching them cleanliness.”⁵⁰ Apart from this Gandhi compelled Hindus to keep the equal approach with Harijans. By obscuring Gandhi’s concern on depressed and oppressed classes and minorities, all followed the Gandhian leadership, so that the Congress Party became the people’s party and National freedom movement became the mass movement and Indian politics became the basis of the people.

Scope of Indian Politics

It is not easy to determine the boundary lines of Gandhian politics, it was boundary less, always evolving and extending from one individual to all, from one village to the villages of the universe. His political scope crossed state, nations and all limitations. He has opinions on scope of his work that “There is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers.”⁵¹ And he opined on the independence that “Isolated independence is not the goal of the world States. It is voluntary interdependence.”⁵² As a cosmopolitan he was working for the welfare of the world. That’s why he preached the philosophy of Sarvodaya, the all round development of all instead of the utilitarian concept of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Dada Dharmadhikari rightly pointed out that “Sarvodaya is a term with a wider connotation since it conceives of assimilation of all and not only of many or most”⁵³ Through his emphasis of the world historical character of the Indian struggle as on behalf of the struggle of the oppressed and the exploited against all oppressors and exploiters, Gandhi universalized the scope of Indian politics. He was thinking himself as fighting for an enhanced new world order and not merely for an Indian freedom. In his political career, he did not emphasize much on the freedom of India, as he rehabilitated British Commonwealth in

⁵⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18-05-1935.

⁵¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 31.12.1931, p.427.

⁵². Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 17.07.1924, p.236.

⁵³. Dharmadhikari, D, *Sarvodaya Darshan*, Sarva Seva Sangh, Prakashan, Varanasi, p. 18.

which India could be a self-respecting and valuable partner. In his own view, the Indian movement was not national but universal, humanly oneness and global in scope. In his life time he strived for our national upliftment, though he never harboured any ill will against other countries. To him patriotism and nationalism are the expensive process of the rest of the world. He further affirmed “I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my country so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind.”⁵⁴ Gandhi’s politics is an ongoing welfare oriented process towards individual, village, state, national and international levels.

Nature of Politics

Gandhi radically reformed the nature of Indian politics by incorporating the traditional spiritual and ethical concepts. It is the eternal fact that Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence as the basis of social order and the techniques of socio-economic and political dynamics. His great contribution towards the political awakening and freedom movement in different parts of the world and adaptation of non-violent strategies, help both the opposing groups respect each other’s sentiments and accommodate the views of others. That is to say “He was the first anti-imperialist leader of the modern age, the first man to mobilize millions for a political cause and fashion the necessary organizational and communicational tools, the first man to invent an unusual method of political struggle and one of the few in history to fight simultaneously on moral, religious, political, social, economic and cultural fronts.”⁵⁵ In other words, Gandhi took the stand for the substitution of power politics in the terms of integrality and equilibrium of ends and means. Ethics is concerned with good and bad in human behavior. Men possess certain

⁵⁴. Richard L. Johnson (ed.), *Gandhi’s Experiments with Truth: Essential Writings By and About Mahatma Gandhi*, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006, p. 90.

⁵⁵. Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi’s Political Philosophy A Critical Examination*, Hong Kong: Macmillan Press, 1989, p. 4.

moral norms on the basis of which they differentiate between right and wrong, just and unjust, good and bad, and they strive to stick to the former side and discard the latter. Ethics helps us to realize more clearly than we do now what are the nature and content of our moral consciousness. The social and political theorists since ancient times have to integrate their ideas about different facts of man's life with certain ethical standards. Plato and Aristotle presented an ethicized study of state. To them state was like 'a partnership in virtue' or a supreme association having its end in the realization of good life. In modern times Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Green, Bosanquet, Nettleship and M.K. Gandhi appreciated the normative aspect of man's life in politics. Gandhi was not satisfied with the idea that morality is simply an individual's affair. He should firmly believed in and straightforwardly supported the socio-economic order and a political system based on the traditional intrinsic worth's like Satya, Ahimsa, Aparigraha, Asteya, and Brahmacharya.

Gandhi was very much conscious in choosing the means to attain his aims. Because of right means only in can be possible to bring good end. He felt that it is a necessary condition to spiritualize the politics. To spiritualize Indian politics, Gandhi provided regeneration and a reinterpretation of the religious context of the world. The modern western theory of the state is the personification of the will of the people and the Hindu theory of state is the embodiment of the Dharma. The state as well as the social order should be based on the Truth and Non-violence and these general spiritual principles of the world should be independent of all religions of the world. This is the leading point to think about the stateless society and also the Marxist parallel theory of the withering away of the state. Another crucial contribution of Gandhi is: spiritualizing the social order through trusteeship. It has two roles in socio-economic and political fields. As a socio-economical role it stopped industrious society from becoming greedy

and exploitative factors. As the political role it gives the resolution to the major problems of western theory of democracy. It is the relationship between the state and the people, the ruler and the ruled in a socio-political system. He followed the compromise approach to resolve the political as well as social disputes. He said that “Human life is a series of compromise, and it is not always easy to achieve in practice what one has to be true in theory.”⁵⁶ And he said “All my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw later that this spirit was an essential part of satyagraha. It has often meant endangering my life and incurring the displeasure of friends. But truth is hard as adamant and tender as a blossom.”⁵⁷ It is one of the part of his political theory and practice. In the critical situation among parties and the people of various groups and among the religions, it is used to change the mind of the disputers through the deep explanation of the other side’s situations. It was very hard to organize people in the multi-dimensional country like India.

Political Techniques

Gandhi formulated his political techniques in accordance with the Indian cultural conditions. Because India is the country, which has multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-geographical traditional people. To organize them he wanted to make a common platform for the multi-diversified Indians. He collected the fundamental principles of all religions and traditions that led him to found the truth, love, brotherhood and non-violence as the fundamental stuff of the world religions and traditions. Under these circumstances he formulated Satyagraha as the suitable tool to reform the socio-economic and political life. The social, economical and political activities or programmes when they are going to function they should follow any one of the

⁵⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 05.09.1936, p. 238

⁵⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *An Autobiography, or The Story of y Experiments with Truth*, op.cit., p. 107.

techniques or methods according to the circumstances. Gandhi said that the right means only can determinate good ends. There is no single possibility to bring good ends through violent and crucial way. According to him, “The means may be linked to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.”⁵⁸ In this context Gandhi carefully chosen truth and non-violence based Satyagraha, Civil Disobedience, Fasting and Non-Cooperation. There were many nationalist movements going on by using violence in twentieth century; Gandhi only sought to employ a method that opposed the practice or the advocacy of violence to achieve political goals. His method was based on ‘Truth, Love and Self-suffering’. Gandhi reformed his political means as non-violent based. Although Gandhi was not the originator of nonviolent struggle, he was a historical player in this refinement and development. He brought strategic sophistication to the technique. His charter was with the people-both intellectuals and the so-called ordinary people alike-who did not shared his full personal beliefs could join in the non-violent struggle and become empowered. He challenged the vast empire of the world had ever soon and won. He developed the non-violent struggle as a political technique. He formulated the application of the techniques for specific purposes, as a substitute both for helplessness and for violence. He consciously developed strategies for use in specific circumstances as a means to increase the likelihood of success. He recognized the technique as a tool through which people could become empowered and accepted the responsibility to help them to act- not to act for them. He combined his work on non-violent struggle with a concept of social renovation through voluntary efforts, the constructive programme. Gandhi used the method of Satyagraha (The Soul Force) to achieve political reforms in South Africa, for Indian independence and transform himself into the person that he wanted to be. Gandhi’s methods brought tremendous honor from people of both national

⁵⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Hind Swaraj*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1939, p. 115.

and international, including his adversaries and served as a means for the mass movement towards ending the British Raj.

As a valuable technique for the society, Gandhi found Satyagraha. According to him it is an ethical technique to fight against untruth with truth and violence with non-violence, a priceless and matchless weapon which contradicts the customary force of resistance. It has the beautiful approach that it does not touch the body of the opponent but touches the deep soul of the opponent and transform his mind, attitudes and characters as a new man with a new vision of truth and justice. It is a tool working in one hand on the individual's mental modification in good manner and on the other hand it is used to change the world in the non-violent manner. Gandhi has defined that "It (Satyagraha) root meaning is holding on truth; hence Truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force."⁵⁹ R.R. Diwakar says that the word Satyagraha is now loaded with so much meaning that it amounts to a philosophy but it is a practical philosophy of life, of action, of self and co-realization. It is a way of change, self-suffering and sacrifices have the major role to the birth of Satyagraha. It treats the opponent like a friend and it does not allow to hurt the opponent physically nor his property and neither abuses him nor thinks ill of him. It is a very powerful weapon to change the mind of opponent through the sufferings and sacrifice. Gandhi has used this in many more junctures to achieve his political ends and social reforms. Twenty first century was opened against the British government's exploitations, injustice and tyranny. People were expressing that opposition with arms on the other hand some sect of people expressing the opposition with unarmed. The armed protest was gained and directed by the leaders like Savarkar, Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad and Aurobindo. Instead of the arms, Gandhi has created various kinds of unarmed techniques under the scrutiny of satyagraha. We

⁵⁹. Hingorani, A. T., (ed.), *The Science of Satyagraha*, Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, 1962, p. 26.

can call these as the kinds of satyagraha. They are civil disobedience, non-cooperation and fasting, etc.

Religious Harmony

Gandhi's technique of freedom cherished the ideal of humanity in any part of the world at any period of history. He was an activist with par excellence. In his early career started at is South Arica, he used to deal with different groups, not merely in crowds and public meetings, but in big camps for the cause of human dignity and rights. His influence on devising shape of Sarva Dharma Samabhava comprising prayers from Veda, Tao, Jain, Buddhist, Paris, Christian and Muslim scriptures. Without any superiority and inferiority. Any prayer meeting held under the auspices of Gandhian institutions at Rajgnat adopt this theme. Being a true believer of truth, he thought that all are sparks of God so that there was no identity based on religion, caste, gender, and all more than Indian. But in India there were many more gaps in various bases, especially based on religion. This gap was a biggest hurdle to his political and social advancement. So he thought that the religious harmony was the necessary condition to attain the prime motive of the individual and nation. To strengthen the national power, he strived to make communal harmony among various religious people of India. He said that Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam of the vedic tradition is not deferent from the Quranic belief that Allah the beneficent and merciful is the creator of all. Nor it is different from the Christian faith that god's love and benediction is for all without any distinction and so on. He wanted to revive the villages and towns of India through truth, non-violence and love. Mahatma Gandhi showed the way of communal harmony and unity by his supreme sacrifice for his motto of 'unto the last' with love, truth and compassion. His secularism is based on truth, justice, love, tolerance, sacrifice, unity and co-operation. The great visionary Gandhi struggled for the religious harmony in future, he stressed upon ethical

teachings in school education. He said that the fundamentals of ethics are common to all religions. He wanted unity of hearts and minds among all religions. Under Gandhi the Hindus and the Sikhs joined the Khilafat movement with the same nationalistic feelings as Muslims. Current united mass movements such as non-violent and non-cooperative movements were based on Hindu- Muslim unity and struggle for India's independence, and it was followed by the civil disobedience movement in 1921. Gandhi said that "Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports."⁶⁰ And also he thought that "Where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration."⁶¹ According to Gandhi the Hindus must understand the Muslim sentiments, emotions feelings and also they must try to win their minds by generous and tolerant ways and not through majority way. He envisaged that the British Government would automatically crumble down, if all the communities of Indian society worked together, suffered together and struggled together as one united body by following the principle of ahimsa. Gandhi started the programme of self-purification by fasting for one month to communicate all the groups of people of India without communal feelings. His method of self-purification and self-sacrifice led all party conferences where the leaders of all communities promised to maintain communal harmony and chalked out directives to remove the main causes of friction.

⁶⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 25.01.1940, p. 536.

⁶¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 18.09.1924, p. 312.

Role of Constructive Programmes

Gandhi visualized the constructive program as the means for the achievement. He insisted that it was not a panacea for all ills and could not give everyone everything they wanted, he maintained that it was the only way that Indians could work towards building a nation in which they could live non-violently and equitably and constitute a model that might inspire the rest of the world. He dismissed as Luddite and a utopian dreamer by most of his contemporaries who were optimistic that modernization, rationalization and technological invention would provide the means to obtain what they wanted. “Constructive programme of Gandhiji’s conception was a revolutionary programme for the development non-violent mass strength and non-violent organization of the people.”⁶² Gandhi maintained that Indians should complement their external struggle for civil rights and enfranchisement with internal struggle are entailing the introspection and reform in the matters pertaining to their Physiological, Psychological, social, economic, political, religious and moral welfare. He insisted that inefficiency and ineffectiveness of Indians external struggle resulted largely from the poor state of their internal health. Through his constructive program Gandhi attempted to initiate a non-violent but radical transformation of the lively experience of ordinary Indians beginning at the level of the individual and moving into ever-widening social formations. In doing so, he faced the bewildering plethora of rhetorical exigencies and audiences. He was compelled by the demands and inducement from various agents of modernity; the imperial establishment, its indigenous allies, nationalists, religious fundamentalists, commercial and industrial interests, the modern professions and a growing urban working class. He had to re-conceive the nation, redefine citizenship, revise the national agenda, re-orient various constituencies and institutions, generate new publics, harmonize

⁶². Sarat C. Joshi, *Gandhian Social Work*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2009, p. 179.

diverse and often irreconcilable interests, allot roles and responsibilities to volunteers, and manage ambitions, rivalries, and incompatibilities. Gandhi deployed a rich repertoire of rhetorical resources as he prosecuted the constructive program, problematizing the existing ideas and practices and inventing new ones. Bikhu Parekh, a critical biographer of Gandhi, explains how the rhetorical aspects of Gandhi's projects contributed significantly to its nature and effectiveness. Gandhi had mastered the indigenous style of symbolic discourse was familiar to his audience. He confused and marginalized the foreign rules and created private space in which he could carry on public conversation with his countrymen in relative privacy. He not only invented and used symbols but became one himself and his manner of dressing, walking, talking, eating, sleeping, sitting, raising his index finger and the choice a sites for his ashrams (cummunes) tapped deep historical memories. The symbols were both packed with and went beyond arguments, and both explained situations and strived people into action. They gave Gandhi's message a power no other form of discourse could have given. Through his twin initiatives of satyagraha and the constructive programmes, Gandhi managed to transform the national movement from an elite bargaining game (a small clique of English educated Indians petitioning for reforms within the framework of pax Britannica) into a mass movement that not only rendered British rule increasingly unsustainable, but seriously eroded its credibility, legitimacy and moral certitude. Moreover, he also compelled Indian nationalists to reinvent themselves as agents (free citizens rather than imperial subjects) to claim different agency than what they were allowed under the imperial system and to reinvent India as a nation that would be free from the imperatives not only British imperialism but also of modernity and global capitalism.

Through the constructive program Gandhi challenged the strategic public private dichotomy that the colonial state had gradually constructed through its legal and administrative system, institutions, policies and practices and that was a process, he reclaimed certain areas of public life as private or communitarian concerns (such as medicine, education, and civil law) and politicized many areas of private life (such as diet, clothing, occupation, and sexuality) as vital sites of political engagement. He also problematized modern institutions such as civil society and representative democracy, insisting that the citizen should participate in the public forums of deliberation and decision making for direct action. Through campaigns of resistance and sustained social service within their local communities, ordinary Indians could take charge of their own lives and welfare rather than surrendering themselves to the machinations of inefficient and ineffective partisan politics and the labyrinthine and inaccessible institutions and associations of the modern state and civil society.

Gandhi redefines many aspects of rhetorical culture, such as nationhood, citizenship, leadership, political action and civic participation. He invited the diverse masses of the Indian sub-continent to identify with one another as the citizens of one nation defined in the terms of shared morals, values and appealed goals. He rejected cultural homogeneity, religious affiliation, economic interest, political expediency as an acceptable base of national integrity. Gandhi redefined the concept of leadership by conducting experiments. As Susanne Rudolph notes, unlike a more rigorously ideological leader, who might expect the human material with which he deals with to adapt itself rather precisely to his movement's normative and behavioral requirements, Gandhi strongly attuned to the varying inner states and potentialities of his followers. As a movement leader he committed to shape men, he suited the shaping to the

characterological contours of his followers and sensitive to the limits of their adaptability. This was not invariably true. Nonetheless, it was a distinguishing mark of his leadership.

Man of peace

The arrival of M.K. Gandhi on the political horizon of India posed sufficient causes to stimulate and attract hundreds of Indians in the direction of Gandhi and more towards his philosophy and later came to be called as Gandhian Philosophy. It is really extraordinary that the personality of Gandhi absorbed the imagination of millions of his national people and in the later phase with an overwhelming numeral of all over the world. It was his unique recognition that in a disturbance of the worldly peace by violence and synthetic hatred, Gandhi stands firm as a man of universal goodwill and also as a central character of peace. What is more noticeable here is that, Gandhi emerged during his life time as a peace maker, even today he is known as a man of revelation by his methods of non-violent to bring resolution to the disagreements. According to the Gandhian scholars and critics, it is not just a matter of national independence against the British imperialism, it is a matter of dominating and exploiting. To Gandhi non-violence is a principal of perpetual technique to the each and every individual of the world.

While questioning the Gandhian method of non-violence it is unavoidable that, is there any reason to refuse non-violence and the Gandhian message of peace in the application of the disputes around the world and among the worldwide leaders? It is not possible to bring the negative answer for this question because there are several evidences around the world for the success of non-violence. Gandhi himself succeeded the South Africa civil rights movements and Indian freedom struggle and Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela like worldwide leaders

succeeded through the application non-violence in several movements. It is not easy to evaluate how much India particularly and the world in common phenomena are indebted to Gandhi in respect of the application of non-violence in public life and the holy mascot of peace. Gandhi said “non-violence as the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of the destruction devised by the ingenuity of man”⁶³ The meaning of peace may differ from people to people, it is liable to Gandhi as a protagonist he said that “I am a man of peace... But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that you find in stone.”⁶⁴ These are few suitable clauses that support Gandhi as a ‘man of peace’. This is only to underline that in spite of being a campaigner of peace, Mahatma Gandhi was not just an appreciator of anything or everything in the name of a peace. He gave equal importance to means as ends. That’s why he suggested non-violence as the best means to the bring peace in the world. Gandhi defined peace without any struggle. In South Africa he found the situation is very critical, in order to bring peace he led movements against coercion white rule. After returning to India in the year 1915, Gandhi started socio-economic and political reformations and campaigns against untouchability, communal disparities, economic inequalities, political domination, British imperialism and other social vices. He concentrated more on the political sphere; he thought that politics as an inseparable part of his religious service. He incorporated religious messages of love, peace, brotherhood, tolerance and mutual adjustment to the cause of religious harmony. His ‘Ram dhun’, the well-liked devotion number, ‘Ishwar Allah tera naam’ is still the nation’s best hymn for Hindu-Muslim peace. This brings a debate like what was then ‘peace’ to Gandhi. Well, one can say that the highly upheld ‘Peace’ was not an end by itself to him. Rather it was only a sort of a means to make sure and also the wellbeing for the mankind.

⁶³. John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, p. 170,

⁶⁴. Sankar Ghose, *Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1991, p. 144.

It is a fact that Mahatma Gandhi was a forerunner of truth in its actual meaning. According to him 'Truthfulness is more important than peacefulness'. In this context, the following words of the Mahatma, as quoted from 'Young India' newspaper are quite relevant. Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "Though we sing "all glory to God on high and on the earth be peace", there seems to be today neither glory to God nor Peace on earth."⁶⁵ These words written by Mahatma Gandhi in December 1931, almost 17 years before his die in January 1948 by an assassin's bullets. It is indeed tragic that a saint of universal peace and non-violence fell as an injured party to violence and hatred. But even today in the circa 2010, Mahatma Gandhi's words of 1931 holds true. The world today is facing the plethora of conflicts – of all types. Therefore, Gandhi emphasized on universal brotherhood and peaceful co-existence. It has all time significance. Therefore his teachings are the most upheld principles of nationalism and worked as means to end the global conflicts. In actual fact, a true indication of Gandhi's teachings lies in the fact that mere 'good ends' do not justify 'bad' means. The world today is highlighted on human decorum and maintenance of the values of natural justice. It is obvious that in today's world, nothing seems to be permanent except the 'crisis of peace' and nothing would be a better tribute to man than to re-dedicate ourselves towards the cause of peace and mutual tolerance. Here lies the relevance of Gandhism in the contemporary society.

⁶⁵. M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 31.12.1931.

CHAPTER III

Gandhi's Political Philosophy

Introduction

Political philosophy is the study of human social organization. It deals with the nature of people in the society. Political philosophy tries to present the consequences in relation to the fundamental cosmological, ontological and epistemological issues. They articulate the views of human nature. This helps in linking the cosmological with the political. Political philosophy investigates political implications of particular argument. It strives to make the sense of what we do and what prescribes and what we ought to do. Political philosophy seeks a rationale for politics and public administration, which examines the practice of governance. It always strives to answer the following questions like: What is the ideal form of government? Is it aristocracy, monarchy, theocracy, democracy or mixture of the different systems or else absolutely no government at all (anarchy)? And which economic system is the best? Mainly capitalistic one, a socialistic one, or by chance a mix of the two? At what point in history did people agree upon the 'need' for the government? How did they live before the investiture of government -- i.e., in the 'state of nature'? Are human beings are intrinsically good or bad, or neither? Do the problems of

society owe mostly due to the man's fallen nature or due to the bad social organization and administration, or due to something else? What corrective agency does the world most need? More religion and spirituality? Wiser, abler rulers? Fewer laws and regulations? By what criteria can a society be judged good? By its wealth? By the way in which it treats its poorest members? By the richness of its art and culture? By the ease with which individual ties are formed? Are we 'our brother's keeper'? Do we have any accountability to those less providential than ourselves? Like this there will be many questions considered by the political philosophers. While dealing with the political philosophy of Gandhi, we have to remember certain characters of Gandhi. First of all, in the scholastic sense he was not a system builder. He did not systemize his political philosophy. All his preachings and writings were pouring from his deep feelings and sincere realization of the truth. Devoid of argument, it can be agreed that he was not dedicated to any exclusive school of philosophy. His speech and writings are the responses from particular circumstances. Gandhi even at the fag end of his life spoke to himself that he had never stopped to grow and therefore, he had been learning from 'Experiment with Truth', as he named his Autobiography. Thus Gandhi had revised his opinions from time to time though his conceptual framework remained the same. He had not altered from his basics. Gandhi never claimed as an original thinker, his political philosophy got the roots from different philosophical systems of both Eastern and Western. Though he had inherited many philosophical backgrounds, he did not agree with any one of them. He had picked up many traditional concepts from his immediate forerunners as well as from the earliest texts. We can find a theoretical structure, common to a philosopher when we look into all of his writings. Furthermore, his conceptual formulations and practical pursuits are identical through which he can be recognized as a philosopher in the Indian sense. Gandhi unlike other philosophers and political thinkers of the world, was not only a man

of destiny of the nation but also was the man of the millennium. This chapter is allocated to discuss about Gandhian political philosophy of State, its nature and functions, Politics and its Power, man's nature and his role in society and also about his concept of means and ends in politics, philosophy of satyagraha, Concept of Rights and Duties, Liberty, Equality, Law and Justice, concept of Democracy, concept of Swaraj and Non-violent State.

Politics and Political power

Politics is the organized dispute about power and its use, involving choice among the competing values, ideas, persons, interests and demands. Political power means the capacity to regulate national life through genuinely elected national representatives. The term politics was used for first time by Aristotle in a broader sense so as to cover the ideal polis (the city- state), the structure of family, the control of slaves and property, causes and prevention of revolutions, forms of government and education etc. It implies that politics act as a peacemaker by offering solution to conflicts and also to the parties. It is a continuous process of development by which certain groups make decisions and maintain the state activities. Politics is the means to create a more organized and peaceful society, by providing methods to resolve the conflicts that naturally occurs among men, by means of civil discussion and rational compromise. It stems the need for violence in tense situations and ultimately tries to avoid the degradation of community into utter chaos. Gandhi said that, "to me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their conditions in every department of life. Political power means the capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation become necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is

never a hindrance to his neighbor.”⁶⁶ According to him politics is the game to attain power, to regain power and to retain power. It is a fact that there is no scope for morality and value in the western concept of politics, because till today politics remain as the power politics. The present condition is affirmative towards Gandhian philosophy of moral values and its relevance in politics, whereas from the very beginning, starting from Gandhi, politics was all pervading and hence, his war of Indian Independence had to be fought with the twin weapons of Truth and Non-violence, which ultimately became a movement and he called it as satyagraha. Arnold Brecht described Gandhi’s understanding of politics as “Scientific Value Relativism.”⁶⁷ Because Gandhi conceived politics as a moral problem of value. It is the need of the hour is to revolutionize politics by ethics. “Unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of political system and constitutions will not work.”⁶⁸ He thought that the politics is the one of means to open the door of service to public and not for misusing the power for one’s selfish purpose.

Gandhi was basically religious as well as the ethical personality. He maintained highest moral standards in politics. As the most crucial strategist in politics he evolved the political methods and campaigned the movements to capture the state’s power through the prolonged mass movement. Gandhi declared on politics that, “For me there is no politics without religion- not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal religion of toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to avoided.”⁶⁹ In addition to that he said, “For me politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who

⁶⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.07.1931, p. 162.

⁶⁷. Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundation of Twentieth Century Political Thought*, Princeton University Press, 1959, Chapter-XI. Cited in http://www.mkgandhisarvodaya.org/articles/g_relevance1.htm.

⁶⁸. Narayan, J. P., *Op. cit.*, 1959, p. 3.

⁶⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 27.11.1924, p. 391.

is religiously inclined, in other words a seeker after God and truth. Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.”⁷⁰ Gandhi said that he did not divide life into watertight compartments. The life of a nation like that of individuals is an indivisible whole. Politics comprises the whole of socio-economic and moral factors of the state, which aimed at promoting the public life. It has the power to activate the state through those representatives which is gained from the individuals of the state in a collective way.

Gandhi has described about the nature of power, that is “Possession of power makes men blind and deaf; they cannot see things which are under their very nose and cannot hear things which invade their ears. There is thus no knowing what power-intoxicated government may not do. So...patriotic men ought to be prepared for death, imprisonment and similar eventualities.”⁷¹ He said that the power can be gained through the service to the people and also through the majority of votes. According to Gandhi power is of two kinds, the first one is captured through the fear of punishment, another one is gaining through love, kindness and tolerance. He described “Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.”⁷² Gandhi opposed the power concentration in a few or single hand. He thought that the concentration of political power leads to the exploitation, inequality and promote the hierarchal society. So equal power possession in the hands of public is necessary to make true democracy. He said that “When people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without such State interference is truly

⁷⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 18.06.1925, p. 214.

⁷¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 13.10.1921, p. 327.

⁷². Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 08.01.1925, p. 15.

democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name.”⁷³

In his Sarvodaya political order, there is no space for politics of Power. Rather it is the base for politics of cooperation. Sarvodaya is the realization of the happiness and elevation of all. There are two techniques for stabilization of power of the people (i) constant propaganda, publicity and (ii) Decentralization of power. The aim is to change the heart of the people. Sarvodaya opposes the ideas of egoism and wealth. There is no scope for class struggle in Sarvodaya. Social good, rationality and communal harmony are basic principles of Sarvodaya. Therefore, Sarvodaya accepts the universalization of self-government. Thus, the political philosophy of Sarvodaya is a powerful intellectual attempt to build the plan of political and social reconstruction on the basis of metaphysical idealism.

Gandhi was considered as the combination of prophet and a politician by several political theorists as well as the activists around the world in a highest caliber. Within himself Gandhi united the feature of the Philosopher and politician. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the crucial admirer and detractor of Gandhi, once he said that Gandhi had to play the roles of a world teacher as well as the Supreme leader of the Indian National Liberation Movement. In a tone of censuring he additionally said, often his former role is the role of a world teacher became so prominent that he had to compromise with his other role. The points of Netaji’s may or may not agreeable but it appears that in the context of national liberation movement there is truth in it. But when we go in the depth of Gandhi's Philosophy, we can realize that there is no dichotomy in Gandhi's perception. It can be said that Gandhi considered politics as an instrument for strengthening human beings in social, economic, moral and spiritual fields. Gandhi himself admitted this to his South African friend that his bent of mind was religious and not political. In

⁷³. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 11.01.1936, p. 380.

1924 Romain Rolland in his biography of Gandhi had commented that Gandhi might have chosen a religious life rather than a politician if Tilak would not have died. To Gandhi politics was his religion. He was against politicizing the religion. He spiritualized religion but he was basically a universal man and never sought his own salvation secluded from the world. For him politics encircled like the coil of a snake. He must wrestle with the snake and there is no respite. He could have kept away from politics, if food and work could be provided to the hungry unemployed people of India. He strongly felt that it is a necessary condition to involve himself into politics for the eradication of exploitation and subjugation in spheres of socio-economic and political fields and thereby moral degradation of the people unless he involved himself in politics.

In this perspective Gandhi confronted with the coil of a snake. No matter how much tough, the task might be, we have to come out from it by wrestling with the snake. This can be successfully performed if we can alleviate the present state of politics to Dharmic politics. The term Dharmic, Gandhi meant that it should be away from humiliating influences and sectarianism. This politics should give privilege to all. Gandhi was not prepared to accept any fixed dogma or mechanical way either for politics or for religion.

Gandhi had a vision of changing the socially, morally degenerate and alienated persons in a manner where individuals can enjoy their freedom in the spirit of unselfishness. To understand Gandhi's politics it is also necessary to know Gandhi's concern for the cleavage between state and civil society. Gandhi opposed the Western Civilization because, it had been hedonistic nature in practice, in the sense of self-centered pleasure, pragmatic in the sense of immediate material benefit and individualistic in the sense of egocentric in the respect of sovereign individual oriented. There by the community life is fast diminishing and civil society could not

prepare any method or system to control it. He found British parliament had become a sterile woman, where naked display of self interest or party interest (or power only) had been manifested. He blamed disease lying with the western civilization itself. Gandhi found that the whole business of politics had been running to a wrong path on a hoax. Generally it is believed that, Gandhi was a man with a great belief on God. For him Truth is God in the fields of life and politics should also be a search for truth and this will lead to the raising common conscience of the people. Every individual must be free from twinges of starvation, should prevent exploitation and domination. Then he would be in a position to work for his own development through the performance of duties. An universal morality would create an atmosphere for healthy political life. To Gandhi self-transformation is necessary to the individuals and also we should be ready to accept this as a perpetual process. Gandhi was forceful in saying that politics bereft of religion is a death trap which kills the soul. It is the condition of our time that the spiritualization of politics, Gandhi meant this is not excluding today's world experiences but something larger than our day to day life. In a spiritualized political method the people based on communities and individuals have ability to resist the corrupting powers on the process of self-realization in political aspect. The process of spiritualization of politics is not just an Utopia far from realities of political life. Many great philosophers right from Plato could not resolve the dichotomy between reality and ideal. In the vision of Gandhi, we should into disbelieve the ability of commoner to rise above the passion and self-interest and we can develop a modus operandi by which a new kind of politics might emerge as Gandhi visualized.

Nature and Functions of the State

State has been viewed differently by different political philosophers. There are different notions on state that have emerged during the course of evolution of political philosophy. Those are

known as Ethical notions of state, The Legal Notion of State, The Power Notion of the State and State as a Natural Institution, State as a Divine Institution and also The Totalitarian Notion of State. According to the Ethical notion of the state, state is the necessary agent for the ethical and intellectual. It is more than the material element. Plato and Aristotle regarded the state as representing the highest form of human life and looked upon it as an institution which made the virtuous life possible. The ethical notion of state was further developed by Hegel, Kant, Rousseau and Green. The legal notion says that, "It was formed for making, interpreting, and enforcing law. It creates laws and norms in order to regulate human behavior. It has coercive power in the case of violation of laws. The legal notion regards the state the state as a legal person having a distinctive personality and will of its own."⁷⁴ Bodin, Hobbes, Bentham and Austin described the state as a legal structure. The power notion of state advocated that it must have power to manage the people's demands and resolve the contradictions in society. Machiavelli was the main exponent of this power notion. State as a Natural Institution says that man became civilized only in state prior to man. It regards state as a natural institution and the state came into existence for the purpose of good life of the society. The notion of State as a Divine Institution, which is created by God and monarch is the representative of God. It also says that, "the King was representative of god will take care of the subjects as a father takes care of the children. He could rule according to his own will. He alone was capable of deciding good from bad. His word was considered to be law."⁷⁵ The medieval thinkers considered the state as a divine institution. It is very much supportive to the monarchy. After that some liberal thinkers thought about state. They said that the state is only man made, which is not a divine institution. State is not an end, it is only the means. The laws formed by the state opposed the human liberty

⁷⁴. Urmila Sharma and Sharma, S.K., *Principles and Theory of Political Science*, Vol-I, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributers, 2000, p. 65.

⁷⁵. *ibid*, p. 66.

and the state is an evil. According to Marxism the state is essentially a class structure. One class dominating over other class in it.

Origin

There are many theories regarding to the origin of state, they are social contract theory, the theory of divine origin, the theory of force, the patriarchal theory, the matriarchal theory, the evolutionary theory, the kingship theory and the priesthood theory. Out of these theories there are four major theories. According to the social contract theory, consent is the basis of government. Because people have agreed to be ruled that governments which are entitled to rule. Social contract theorists envisage a transition from a state of nature to a state of government. Individuals come together and form contracts which serve their interests and these contracts establish rule. Social contract is a set of culturally based upon norms that help in maintaining the social solidarity. The elements of the social contract are not explained or concretely agreed upon - they just become norms. In 'social contract' people give up freedom to some extent because it is good for the society as a whole. The divine origin theory is one of the earliest theories. The main principles of Divine origin theories are:

- 1) The state was the creation of God.
- 2) The king who ruled the state is the direct representative of God on Earth. In Indian tradition the idea of divine origin is evidenced in Manu's order of Law. In the ShantiParva of the Mahabharata and also in the Ramayana, the king Ram was considered as lord Ram. In Christianity the evidence of Divine Origin is found indirectly and also to some extent in Jewish

tradition. The theory of divine origin is based on two premises, since the king is the agent of the god on earth, to obey the king is to obey god and the disobedience to king would lead to harassment. Therefore the authority of the king has divine sanctions and the obedience to the king was obligatory. Thus god is the source of all powers of the king.

3) The king was the agent of god on Earth and so he was responsible to god and not responsible to the people therefore the king was above all laws. The natural consequences of this theory are a dictatorial form of government. Because the king was not responsible to the people and above all laws and the people could not question the ruler, so the people were enduringly conquered before the king's power. In this process, the people's political awareness was blunted forever by the ruler or king.

According to the force theory, the state is the result of the subjugation of the weaker by the stronger. The theory of force explains the origin of the state in terms of force which is based on analysis of human nature; it also holds that the state is a product of the use of force by strong against the weak. This theory reveals that the prime nature of human beings desire is to capture and concentrate on more and more power in their hands. In the early hours of human history, the basic power ravenous instincts of humans manifested itself in incessant conflict. It was a common practice in primitive society that presents a picture of kinfolk martial events which was continually engaged in disputes with one another. The stronger tribes assaulted, captured and imprisoned the weaker tribes. This led to the expansion of clans which came to be known as tribes and the authority of tribal chief came to be established over a particular territory. This marked the emergence of political territory. It may be assumed that this territory in course of time developed into a society. The evolutionary theory of state origin is known as historical theory and it says that the state came into existence along with natural development. The state is

a product of the history, which means, J.W. Burgess says, it is a steady and incessant development of human society out of imperfect beginning through crude but developing forms of manifestation towards a perfect and universal organization on mankind. According to this theory we cannot find the beginning time and cause. The above mentioned theories of the state revealed about the creation of state in the human society and questioned, is there any person or cause that leads the state to start, whether it is pre-existed before the individual or manmade and is there any specific force or God.

Characteristics of the State

State as a political as well as a social organization must possess some characters as its nature. The eminent scholar Samuel Finer describes the following five essential characteristics of the state:

1. They are territorially defined populations and each recognizes a common paramount organ of the government.
2. This organ is served by specialized personnel; a civil service, to carry out the decisions and a military service to back these by force where ever necessary and to protect the association from similarly constituted associations.
3. The state is recognized by other similarly constituted states as independent on its territorially defined—and hence confined—population, that is, on its subjects. This recognition constitutes what we would today call its international sovereignty.
4. Ideally at least, but to a larger extent in practice also, the population forms a community of feeling based on self-consciousness of a common nationality.

5. Ideally at least and to a large extent in practice, the population forms a community in the sense that its members mutually participate in distributing and sharing the duties and benefits.

According to Gandhi the state must be non-violent without coercive force. It will ensure the individual freedom and autonomy. In Gandhian model of state, both political and economic power should be decentralized at all levels.

Elements of the State

According to Kautilya, to carry out its functions, the state should have well developed lawmaking apparatus, because ‘a chariot cannot run on a single wheel’. According to him, the state contained the seven organs or component parts: (1) The king (2) Ministers (3) Country (4) Capital city (5) Treasury (6) Army and (7) Allies. To carry out different responsibilities of the state it is necessary to incumbent upon all these seven elements. Kautilya contended that it was the king’s duty to eliminate the defects of the constituent rudiments and keep them in a state of readiness. These rudiments were inter-related and inter-dependent. In the normal circumstances, the king was the most important component, but the importance of different constituents varied with the circumstances. For example, in times of war, the army became most important and in times of enemy attack, the fortified capital city assumed primary importance. Allies were not exactly constituted as a part of the government, but the friendly powers always ready to help the king, they were considerably significant. The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications:

(a) A permanent population (people)

(b) A definite territory

(c) Government (political authority) and

(d) Power to enter into relations with the other states (diplomat recognition or sovereignty).

Population

State is a socio-economic and political institution of human beings living together as a community, in which the population of a state consists all of the people without any kind of variations like superior or inferior approaches. It consists of nationals and foreigners. It is pointed out by the doctrine that there is no condition like requirement of a population and also the requirement of nationality. There is no need of culture, language, race and tradition along with the homogeneous population of a state. Indeed, it is even rare, except for Micro-States, to find a State with a homogeneous people. It does not require by the International law that the minimum number of inhabitants constituting a State. The Micro-States with the smallest number of nationals can be found in Nauru and in Monaco. This figure can be even lower if we take into account that theoretically Pitcairn with fifty two populations has the right to opt for nationhood by virtue of its right to autonomy. Due to the limited number of inhabitants it is not possible to the global society to give the reservations to the Micro-States. It is a fact that in these states the inhabitants were outnumbered by foreign people.

Territory

The geographical area which is owned, controlled and maintained by certain governments or state is considered as the territory of that country. The state is liable to exercise such states sovereignty and its functions of socio-economic, political and legal community of human beings of the given territory. Consequently, the eminent professors of Law gave the definition of the

territory. The territory clearly includes and refers to the state's as well as the individual's land territory, internal waters and territorial sea (straits) through which state claims for sovereignty and the air space above this territory. It is required that the State must consist of a certain coherent territory effectively governed and the territory of a State need not be exactly fixed by definite frontiers.

Government

The government is the executive branch of the state and has the role to administer the state uniformly in the following features: political, economic, social, cultural, use of natural resources, environmental protection, national defense and security and foreign affairs. Form of state depends upon the constitution drafted, generally structure of state can be divided into: unitary state and federal state, this probably affects the government in exercising limit on its power. Government's control gives rise to fraud, suppression of Truth, intensification of the black market and artificial scarcity. Above all, it unmans the people and deprives them of various schemes, it undoes the teaching of self-help. I look upon a more centralization in the power of the State with the greatest fear because, by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to human beings by destroying individuality. Among many transgression of the British rule in India, history will look upon the Act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest. So it is better to find the general work of mankind that is being carried on from day to day and by the mass of people acting as if by instinct. If they were unconsciously brutal, the world would end in no time. When the mind of the common people is unnaturally influenced by evil personalities it leads to violence. The people will forget their commitment and start violence and other brutal activities because that is their own nature. The government with evil nature has no room for good men and women except in its prisons. Gandhi said that, By Swaraj I mean the government of

India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. “Real Swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”⁷⁶

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is said to be the excellence of having absolute and independent authority over a territory. It can be found in a power to rule and make law that rests on a political fact for which no legal explanation can be provided. The definition of ‘the Sovereignty’ is quite similar to ‘the Independence’ and mostly they used together. State’s sovereignty signifies the competence, independence and legal equality of states. The international law permitted each state to decide and act without any interruption from other sovereign countries. The concept of sovereign is ever inclusive and consists of all activities of certain nation. It includes the choice of socio-economic, political, cultural systems and the formulation of foreign policy. It is a fact that the freedom of the sovereign country and its extent level cannot be isolated but it can depend upon the development in the international law and international relations.

Functions of the State

⁷⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 29.01.1925, p. 41.

State as a political and social organization, must perform its functions. The functions seem to be one of the factors of defining the statehood. It has two major kinds as the compulsory functions and voluntary functions. The compulsory functions further classified as:

- 1) Defense against foreign attack
- 2) Internal peace and security
- 3) Protection of Rights of Citizens
- 4) Justice.

The Voluntary functions of the state are classified as:

- 1) Education
- 2) Health
- 3) Production of the old, poor, and invalid
- 4) Arrangement of public welfare services
- 5) Social and economic improvement
- 6) Encouraging trade and industry
- 7) Organization of the labour
- 8) Proper use of the national resources of the country
- 9) Arrangement of the recreation.

It is a fact that guarantee for the welfare of the people was the state's goal and this required finances, the king had a legitimate right to realize a share of the agricultural produce. This was the revenue he received for extending protection to the subjects. It was condemned the tax in higher extension and revenue was to be realized just as a 'bee gleans nectar from flowers'. The king was also supposed to correct his subjects' defects in such a manner that they suffered no harm. In Mahabharata Bhishma compared this to a washerman washing clothes and removing

dirt without affecting the texture and color of the fabric. The Mahabharata has other equivalent statements like the king should collect the taxes from the people who can have enough money to pay and he should use that income for the welfare of the people, just like the circulation happening in the natural mechanism among the sun, oceans, rivers and tanks.

Gandhi wanted the state to be free from its violent elements and sought to inculcate fearlessness in the minds of people. In his concept of Swaraj, there is decentralization of political power and India was to be a confederation of thousands of self-governing and self-reliant villages: innumerable circles of village republics. But these village republics were not to be hierarchically organized; instead they would be 'oceanic circle' of structure in organization. In the ocean, all waves maintain similar levels and no one dominates over others; similarly, to prevent oppression, In the Gandhian concept of Swaraj, Ramrajya or the kingdom of God ought to be established first in our own souls, then only it can be extended to the villages. Swadeshi- the use of homemade materials in the industry and the refuse of foreign goods was a means to attain Swaraj. It is not possible for a modern State which is based on force of non-violence to oppose the forces of chaos, whether peripheral or domestic. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is the claim of the time that the State must be based on non-violence because there is a scope for non-violent resistance against the tribulations of the world by armed force. The State of Ashoka's was such. The example can be repeated. But the situation does not become weak even if it is exposed that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined basing on its merits. On one occasion Gandhi said that, "there can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able

to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents.”⁷⁷ According to Gandhi the state has to be democratic based on non-violence and without much interference of individual freedom. He said that “The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but the state is a soul-less machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.”⁷⁸ To him violence is the biggest obstacle to the natural development of individual and social life of the state. Gandhi opposed the increasing power of the state; because it leads the state as coercive. He said that, “I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress.”⁷⁹ Gandhi described his ideal state as per his following words, “If national life becomes as perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that Government is best which governs the least.”⁸⁰ Gandhi emphasized that the state should be less power concentration in its hand and intended to promote the individuals freedom, protecting all kinds of equality in the society.

Gandhi’s Concept of Man

It is the pre-condition that the socio-economic and political theories must begin with the clear cut vision on psychology of man, because the psychology of man influences human conduct and his

⁷⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 12.05.1946, p128.

⁷⁸. Jesudasan, Ignatius., *A Gandhian Theology of Liberation*, Ananda India: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1987, pp. 236-237.

⁷⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *India of My Dreams*, Ahmadabad: Navjeevan Trust, 2009, p. 82.

⁸⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.07.1937, p162.

aims in society. The great political philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes and Rousseau have recognized this psychological nature of man. The quest for the definition of man is the main concern for the political and social philosophers of the world. Majority of political thinkers differ in ensuring the powers that are essential to people. This means, the realities are demonstrable but cannot be decisively established, the values and choices commended may be protected or uncertain in terms of ethical doctrines and ordinary experiences. They must be for each individual to test for himself. Man first of all should look into his nature as if out of himself, before he finds it in himself. Man denies himself while he attributes to God or Nature. On the other hand man may state that truth related to God or Nature, concerns towards himself also. There are two theoretical contradictions between the Augustinianism and Pelagianism about the relationship between the man and God. The first one located God in the place of man and the later located man in the place of God. The objection on divinity of man is always going together with the humanization of God in the willingness of human beings what they likely to be, but it never become real. The denial of God often leads to the deification of man. In world view man was considered as an essential forming of an integral part of a larger and conceptual world. It is conceptual order that implies the locus of norms and values that shapes man's ideas, customs and instructions.

According to Gandhi, human beings are essentially moral and spiritual beings sanctified with the divine gift of reasoning or thinking. The union with God is the main concern of the spiritual aspect of man. He considered that giving birth to all great cultures of the world as human achievement. The necessary activities of the world are selected or stimulated to act by the moral aspect of man for the good of others or to the common good. This must be based on the courageous sacrifice and selflessness at every stage of life. The rational character of man is the

special faculty of human being over other beings by which we can think about the nature and infinities of God or Truth and also think over the meaning of life, its insinuations and creative application of universal values such as good, right and justice in certain circumstances. From this standpoint, “Gandhi would have agreed with Mohammed’s distinction between angels, men and animals. Angels have intellect, but no sensual nature. Animals have a sensual nature but no intellect. Man has both an intellect and a sensual nature. He is less than an animal when he subordinates his intelligence to his sensual nature, but greater than the angels when he subordinates his animal passions to his reason. The primary agent of ‘universal welfare’ or ‘universal uplift’ then is the self consciously individual. He or she is the key and the keystone to all considerations of spiritual, moral and material progress. The individual who has taken a vow can become a radiant center point among multitudinous other center points in ever-expanding circles of humanity. The vast potential of Truth-force lies in the bosom of the unconditional person, heroically determined to serve the family of man within the microcosm of his own community or village. The latter is critical since Gandhi makes it eminently clear that the individual can only realize his true nature within the context of the expanding concentric circles of life: the family, the community, the nation, the world. Self-actualization can only occur in the midst of society, not apart from it.”⁸¹ Man according to Gandhi is a homo-duplex divided self. In the western philosophy we find similar conceptions of Man in the deontological philosophy. For example Kant made differentiation between two men found within every individual. The first one is instrumental, it is directly visible and finds in an efficient way. The next is the free-will and values of human beings, the world of reason, which leads to recognition of moral imperatives. The first man acts out inclinations, the second; in pursuit of what is right. Gandhi calls the first as the ego or the small self and the second as the Self (the bigger Self). Such a man

⁸¹. http://www.worldculture.org/articles/gandhisarvodaya_tepfer.pdf

is in perpetual conflict between different orders of desires, quite akin to Freud's distinction between identification and super-ego which are in perpetual conflict between instinctual urges and socially introduced morality. Now, Gandhi claimed that what distinguishes man from other animals is their ability to form higher order desires, and changing their first order desires a process which Gandhi calls as self-realization. Such a man is motivated to act by the soul-force, constantly seeking to purify himself and to transcend the lower order of desires in the pursuit of the higher ones, is a seeker of the Truth – a Satyagrahi. Thus the Gandhian Man is a moral-ethical being and a multidimensional personality pursuing its own Self-realization (homo humanis). Self is being realized and is distinct from the ego (or, the Small Self). The process of self-realization (which is central to Gandhian economics) is a process of the growth and expansion of the Self and correspondingly a shrinking of the ego, a process through which ultimately the ego consciousness totally yields to Self, God or Truth consciousness. The homo economics in conventional economics. It suffers from a limited consciousness. He is only aware of his ego and is motivated to act by the utilitarian principles of pleasure. It is governed by maximizing behaviour, regardless of altruistic views and ultimately determined by the maximization of use value or utility. In other words, morality only exists if it is in our rational self-interest and the so-called altruism is nothing but the result of calculated maximization of some kind of a utility index. Man is always under constant fear of not being sufficient of what he needs. The meaning of the homo economics decreases the anxiety-ridden chase for pleasure. The conventional economics which emphasize on self-interest and maximization are the prime-movers of human action. They strip the homo economics off the Gandhi's concept of self and maintain that the only interest is ego-type self-interest. From the Gandhian perspective, the homo economics is at a very low level of human development. In his construction Gandhi ennobled

man by endowing him with a higher self (synonymous with Truth, Perfection, and above all God) and by making him capable of its realization. Conflict between ego-centered motivation (i.e., maximization) and Self- interested motivation commitment to Truth takes the centre stage.

Means and Ends

The problem of means and ends has the important role in Indian philosophy. The ultimate end of the individual and society is varied with one another. Someone may feel spiritual perfection or love or money or power or fame is as his own. Most of the world's political and socio-economic thinkers have been concerned with the desirable or necessary aims of certain system, whether it is political, social and economic etc. If we want to achieve the ends in any field, we must follow certain means as a path leading process. So means and ends are closely related and defended with one another, Gandhi described this as, "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."⁸² Gandhi believed that, to achieve the truthful and positive end, man should take the truthful and positive means because to him means do not serve ends, rather means create ends. It is summing up by the following way as the means are the ends in the making. While means are creating the ends, they have two inspiring insinuations. First, it is not possible to any one who describes a just, non-violent end by using the unjust and violent means to attain it, the selection of means should be based on what end in character we need. It is the vision that prevents actions based on the philosophical concept of the ends justify the means is the concept that seems to permeate current U.S. law making. Indeed, the ends being formed by present government rules with regard to some drugs are very different than the legitimately affirmed aims.

⁸². Gandhi, M. K., *Hind Swaraj*, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1939, p, 115.

A second implication is that, each and every action creates the next action and the earlier one leads to the later one, thus the precise description on end is not possible while one firmly striving for the attainment of pure truth and justice. Each action will always keep in touch with the last and moving progressively closer to truth and justice. Through actively engaging with fellow activists and the opponent, one can understand what must be done, a step at a time, to create the most just and truthful end. The method of non-violence becoming more active by bringing the internal changes in the minds of the opponents. It is the parallel process simultaneously stimulating both the activist and the opponent in attaining truth and justice. However, the method is not self-propelling; and is using normally in the context of an inactive, inert or intentionally destructive force and there is a need of tremendous power. The campaigners have to continually re-examine the opponent's understandings and regulate the agenda so that it is more than reactive to the opponent's change. Each change must lead to the chance of moving further.

The insidious argument said that the ends justify the means, Gandhi replied to this argument as they say that means are after all means. I would say that means are after all everything. Further he said as the means, so the end. Certainly, the Creator has given us limited power over means, none over end. Gandhi used some means to achieve certain ends, like non-violence (Ahimsa) to attain truth (Satya). It is fact violence and non-violence is the two means to achieve the same end. As a result these should be differentiated in respect of quality and essence. Violent means can lead to the coercive and immoral ends; it will be evil and illusory in its essence and quality. Gandhi said that violence breeds violence. Pure goals can never justify impure or violent action. It means after all just means and as the means, so the end. If we are

more conscious on means we are bound of reach the end earlier or later. The non-violent means can lead to the peaceful good ends.

Gandhi used soul-force or truth-force (Satyagraha) in various forms like civil-disobedience, non-cooperation and fasting to achieve his political ends like self-rule (Swaraj), trusteeship to attain his economic end of self-reliance (Swadesi). Gandhi suggested decentralization in both political and economic spheres of the national life to create equality in society. His moral principles are considered as means and he has incorporated the moral and religious principles in politics and socio-economic thoughts. For the future purpose of creating Sarvodaya society (welfare of all) he preached the above mentioned means to achieve the unexploited egalitarian society. Gandhi emphasized the purity of means in every walk of life. In Gandhian thought, means and ends are considered as constituting continuous process and organic whole. According to him man can choose the right means, but he cannot command the results. Both means and ends are equally important. By nature non-violent means justifies the peaceful ends.

Concept of Non-violent State

According to Gandhi, non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like other virtues. To him non-violence was the basic precept in his political activities; he cultivated all the political techniques purely based on non-violence. He used non-violence to achieve his political aims. He says that the society is mostly directed by the expression of non-violence in its reciprocated dealings. The state must be built on non-violence otherwise it will be inconsistent with the natural development of people. Gandhi has the opinion that, the stateless

society is the means to the non-violent state, it should have minimum interference in individual's autonomy and non-coercive.

He explained the practicability of Ahimsa-the non-violence and placed it as an effective weapon for direct action, was unique in itself. Through the ages, non-violence is existing in worldly life in various types both in theory and practice. It was conceived as a personal virtue or a value, especially to be practiced by Rishis, Saints or Incarnations, Messengers of God and that too in social and religious fields but, it was Gandhi, who, perhaps for the first time in the entire human history, declaring it to be a social virtue or as a value also, called upon humanity to cultivate it like other virtues or values in routines. In his own words: "Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue confined only to the Rishis and the Cave-dwellers. It is capable of being practiced by the millions, not with full knowledge of all its implication, but because it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence (in all walks of life including political), and not merely to the belief in it."⁸³ Further he stated: "Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale."⁸⁴ By the way of giving new dimension and more extension to the concept of non-violence Gandhi stated that the purest non-violence is characterized in upholding the propensity towards the advantages of both spiritual physical unto to each and everyone with altruistic and pure thought. The whole world realizes that the non-violence (Ahimsa) is the basis in his political philosophy. He led his compatriot to the freedom movements of their homeland, India, and guaranteed liberation from the centuries back age old fetters of slavery and elucidated the meaning and purpose in a comprehensive and

⁸³ . <http://www.globalpolitician.com/print.asp?id=3656>.

⁸⁴ . Ibid.

the way of universal wellbeing, explained a unique, evergreen and exemplary path to the populace of the whole world to attain freedom and protected justice at all levels even in democracy. Gandhi's ideal State is to be non-violent. According to him a state embodied with violence in a concentrated and organized form, becoming non-violent State is a contradiction in its terms. Ultimately, when non-violence is the governing principle of society, we can not consider it as a State. It can only be considered as a non-violent and stateless society. And that peaceful society is the ideal egalitarian for Gandhi.

In that non-violent social order everyone would understand automatically to scrutinize their social responsibilities without the operation of the government. The need of law enforcement arises if people are in deficiency. The important insinuation of Gandhi's concept of self-rule is rested in the fact of the imbibed strength of non-violence and the fewer needs of the government. According to Gandhi the endeavor to achieve self-rule is self-rule itself. It is a developing ideal and is better than the best. He calls it as indefinable. In the background of the freedom movement of India he said that self-rule did not mean simply political sovereignty but many other things. In Western method of parliamentary government, self-rule is accepted for the time being only. In Gandhi's ideal world there is no space for the armed and other violent force, yet in the actual state due to the ethical slenderness of its people there is a provision for it. It is said that the non-violent state is the realistic possibility and is the greatest model of Gandhi. Failure to recognize the levels in Gandhi's thought results in such confused statements as this: "It is indeed clear that Gandhi held essential ideals in common with anarchists, that he was willing, as they are not, to accept a degree of state organization and control. He believed that government to be best which governs least, and yet he held that 'there are certain things which cannot be done without political power', even though there are 'numerous other things which do not at all

depend upon political power'It would, of course, be incorrect to suppose that Gandhi thought of retaining the state as some intermediate step in a determined progress towards anarchical society.”⁸⁵ Gandhi’s real state granted the appeal for utilizing the armed and the police to deal with anti-social rudiments and protect the country. His approach admits the weakness not of the principle of Ahimsa or of Satyagraha, but of the persons who follow it. Whatsoever the political institution Gandhi accepted, he did it through the transitional device, which is to go beyond by better ones. No institutional device is final. They must evolve with the evolution of individuals. In actual practice, it would be a combination. So he said that a government stands for all the people of that state, so it is not possible to the government completely to become as non-violent. He anticipated that the state’s rule would predispose towards militarism of a customized character. Gandhi suggested that, India should decentralize many things if it wants to develop a non-violent way because adequate force is necessary for the sustenance of centralization. It is an eternal fact that the centralization as a system it is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society.

Non-violent Police

According to Gandhi in order to save people and their property the police force may be necessary even in a non-violent state. At the same time that force should be organized with the believers of non-violence. He also said that, I can imagine the state without police force but we should try to realize it in our day today life. In this non-violent state police and public can call them for help and through their mutual understanding and co-operation they can easily reconcile the internal problems of the state. The violent quarrels rich and poor, the capital and labour and the community based on conflicts and these consequents of strikes, protests and condemnation all

⁸⁵. http://www.mkgandhi.org/g_relevance/chap27.htm.

will be resolved by the non-violent security force. In such a protected society there is no scope for any kind of communal disturbances.

Non-violent Army

A non-violent army will not act like armed men, in times of peace and disturbances. Their responsibilities join the community together, carryout peace mis-information, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in contact with each particular person in their parish or division. This non-violent militant force is always ready to act in any emergency and also in problematic situations. They will be sincere and dedicative in protecting people and peace. It is the condition of our time to bring the peace in our soil that the Truth-force (Satyagraha) brigades should be established in every village and every block of buildings in the cities. In non-violent bodies the soul-force must mean all and the physique must get second place. It is not easy to find such people in our time. That is why the non-violent force must be small if it has to be efficient. There are two ways to avoid the attack from outside. Yield to possession, but non-cooperate with the invader and prefer demise to submission. The next way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been taught in the non-violent method. The unanticipated spectacle of never-ending rows upon human beings and simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an invader must ultimately thaw him and his soldiery cluster. It is the power of non-violence if a nation or group of people upholds the non-violence as its ultimate law or rule, it is not that nation or group of people subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb. Before universal disarmament commences some nations have to be disarmed and predict the biggest dangers. In such circumstances the level of non-violence in the state will be gladly comes and of course risen so elevated to command the worldwide admiration.

Non-violent Economy

It is said that Economic equality is the one of the basic tenets of non-violent freedom in the society. The state which is based on non-violent system of government is impossible with the extensive gap between the wealthy and poor. An aggressive and blood-spattered rebellion is certain on one day unless there is a charitable abdication of riches and the rich distribute their wealth for the common good. All have not the same capacity. It does not mean that cramping the talent. It is a kind of equalizing the status of humanity according to their capacities and capabilities.

Philosophy of Satyagraha

By analyzing human history it is inferred that great men have always been struggled against the existing social evils and human suffering. Gandhi seems to be one among such great men in human history. It is an eternal fact that when the history produces the great men, the great personalities act as the agents of the history. Gandhi acted in response to the challenge of the given historical state of affairs and understands the chronological requirements of his period and in his own way, he strived to actualize the wants and ambitions of the populace. Hegel describes the nature of great man as: “The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is, and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age, he actualizes his age.”⁸⁶ Gandhi said that the word Satya (Truth), is derived from Sat, which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. Truth (Satya) entails love, and firmness (Agraha) engenders and as a result serve up as an opposite for force. So Gandhi started to describe the national freedom struggle as Satyagraha, and also the force which comes

⁸⁶. Hegel, C. W. F., *Philosophy of Right*, (trans.) Knox, T.M., London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p-295.

out from Truth and Love or Non-violence and used the expression of passive resistance. He formulated the features of Satyagraha as:

I. Sat - This entails sincerity, truthfulness, and justice: Truth.

A) The opinions and beliefs of the individuals signify the fraction of truth.

B) It is the condition that shares the truth cooperatively so as to realize its extent level.

C) This entails a longing to communicate and a determination to do so, which revolves the needs of rising and refining relevant ability of communication.

D) Dedication to realize the truth is the probable way that we can not classify ourselves or others.

II. Ahimsa - rebuttal to impose injury and harm on others.

A) Ahimsa is described as our dedication to communication and sharing of our love and truth. The violence closed the medium of communication.

B) Ahimsa has been considered as the main teaching of the major religions of the world.

C) Ahimsa is an expression of our conscious humankind that is manifested and respected.

D) The practice of Ahimsa imposed us to have the genuine love on our opponent.

III. Tapasya – willingness for self-sacrifice.

A) Whoever follows the vows of satyagraha called as satyagrahi. He is always ready to sacrifice for common the cause with willingness. It is the voluntary suffering or sacrifice to convert the opponents towards Truth.

B) The satyagrahi must always provide a face-saving "way out" for the opponents. The goal is to find out a wider panorama of truth and justice and it is not a victory against opponent.

According to Gandhi in general, the technique of non-violent action is called as Satyagraha. It is also known as the Truth-force and in its extent of understanding it is the force of love produced through the adherence to Truth. In this day the concept of non-violence is getting mere alternative option over the atom bombs and army force. Non-violence was the word for a special, wider concept namely for Gandhi such as a way of life based on love and compassion. In Gandhi's expressions, Satyagraha is the Truth-Force. It is the result of nonviolence. Gandhi said that, "Satyagraha can be adopted by anybody. Gandhi said that Satyagraha was like a banyan tree which had innumerable branches. Satya and ahimsa together made its parent trunk from which all the innumerable branches shoot out."⁸⁷ Essentially satyagraha is the weapon of the strong not of the cowardice, it never admits violence under any circumstances and it ever insists upon truth. Satyagraha has also been considered as a weapon of soul force to resist any kind of oppression. Whereas Gandhi looked upon satyagraha as a way of life, during the independence movement of India, Satyagraha was used as a method to resist the authority of the state and to attain various things for the general wellbeing of the people.

⁸⁷. Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973, p.270.

The non-violence and the peace making method of Satyagraha are considered as the supreme and the most unique contribution of India to the contemporary world. According to Gandhi satyagraha is the surest method to achieve the political, social and economical aims. He said that “My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.”⁸⁸ Gandhi described that the prime purpose of satyagraha is to eliminate the evil not the evil doer and also the transformation the opponent. In our socio-economic political scenario, there is a terrible need to wean the person away from the influence of prosperity, lavishness and authority. First of all the South African political struggle and Gandhi’s role as a revolt against the practice of apartheid has significant role in his thought process. Then the non-violent national movements in India against the colonialism influenced his political ideals. Truth and non-violence forms the bedrock of Gandhian Philosophy. The most noteworthy characteristic of his life is that without practice of any concept, he never preached to other. Despite his conscious devotion in religion and God, he is essentially a man of action. He thought that the service to the humanity is the best and possible means to realize the God. Gandhian philosophy of satyagraha is based on the Truth and Non-violence, the twin concepts of Gandhism. They seem to be the basic tenets of Gandhian concept of satyagraha.

⁸⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 20.07.1947, p. 240.

Gandhi's Concept of Truth

The realization of Truth or Satya was the ultimate aim of Gandhi, thereby he dedicated his whole life for discovering Truth. He tirelessly tried to attain this end by gathering knowledge from his own blunders and conducting own experiments with Truth. In that way Gandhi named his autobiography as 'The Story of My Experiments with Truth'. Gandhi pointed out that the most significant struggle was: conquering the evil spirit, doubts and insecurities of his personal. He explained the concept of Truth in two stages: the first stage is God is Truth. In the second stage he changed his statement as Truth is God. Consequently it is said to be the Truth in Gandhi's philosophy as God and Truth only will tolerate; the rest of things all will be swept away before the tide of occasion. The Truth and untruth of the perception of the same reality may differ between the one individual to other but it is not necessary to bother about the seeker of Truth. These two are often co-exist; good and evil often are found together. Gandhi said that "Use truth as your anvil, non-violence as your hammer and anything that does not stand the test when it is brought to the anvil of truth and hammered with ahimsa, reject as non-Hindu."⁸⁹ In addition to that he said "Truth and ahimsa demand that no human being may debar himself from serving any other human being, no matter how sinful he may be."⁹⁰ If we eagerly want the Truth for the life magnificence and honesty will automatically added in our life. By extending Truth in the society it is not possible that error can become as truth at the same time truth also can not turned into error even though nobody sees it. Truth must consists of humbleness otherwise that will be an egotistical picture. To Gandhi, the search of Truth must be engaged with self-suffering, occasionally even unto death. There were sequences of experimentation with truth in Gandhi's

⁸⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol- 26, New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Education and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 374.

⁹⁰. *ibid*, p. 374.

life. Therefore that is liable to say that the conception of Truth is the fundamental to his life and works. I do not claim that the principles I have pointed out exhaust his conception; but I believe that they constitute its basic elements.

Gandhi's Concept of Non-Violence

The principle of non-violence is a relative but not a complete or a constant principle to Gandhi. He never tried to suggest the complete non-violence, since he realized the fact that either human life or human organizations cannot continue to exist on the basis of pure non-violence. Gandhi observes: "Strictly speaking no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little. Even the very process of living is not possible without a certain level of violence. What we have to do is to minimize it to the greatest extent possible."⁹¹ However he is of the opinion that we can reduce violence to the utmost extent because obliteration is redundant and avoidable. He suggested that we should commit to least violence that is inevitable for the survival of human life. Violence, when it is inevitable, must be working in an ethical spirit, that is, for the sake of creating a more appropriate surroundings for the enlargement of non-violence. Gandhi defined non-violence as abstaining from "causing pain to, or killing any life out of anger, or for a selfish purpose, or with the intention of injuring it."⁹²

Gandhi's concept of non-violence had two considerations:

- (a). Non-violence in thought and
- (b). Non-violence in action.

He is not ready to negotiate the first one but he is flexible in the case of second.

According to Gandhi there are five simple axioms in his concept of non-violence. They are:

⁹¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 28.07.1960, pp-271-72.

⁹². Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 21.10.1926, p.363.

1. “Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.
2. Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.
3. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he could have if he was violent.
4. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.
5. The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory –if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.”⁹³

Through these axioms Gandhi described the nature of non-violence and violence and its necessity to uphold one’s life individually and socially. His practice of non-violence requires immense moral courage. It has no room for cowardice or weakness. It is the highest asset of the courageous. True non-violence, for Gandhi, assumes the tenure of pure bravery. Gandhi asserts: “I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.”⁹⁴ He justified the use of violence by those who do not know how to defend themselves or honour their families in a non-violent way. He regards that physical violence accompanied by mental good-will, is better than physical non-violence accompanied by mental violence. Therefore, the theory of non-violence to Gandhi contains some constituents of violence than vulnerable capitulation to wickedness.

According to Gandhi violence means “a violent intention behind a thought, word, or deed, that is, an intention to harm.”⁹⁵ In order to save sub-human life, Gandhi is not ready to forfeit human life, Gandhi said: “I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing

⁹³. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 12.10.1935. p. 276.

⁹⁴. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 11.08.1920, p. 3.

⁹⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 19.12.1936, p.362.

of animals. Who devour or cause hurt to man. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs."⁹⁶ It is an eternal fact that he was ready to sacrifice all other social values for the sake of non-violence at the same time he was not ready to sacrifice the non-violence. Gandhi argues: "If non-violence fails to defend the honour of a women, it is not at all non-violence."⁹⁷ Gandhi thought that self-preservation is woman's instantaneous duty when she is assaulted. In that moment it's not necessary to think in terms of violence or non-violence. In order to protect her respect, she must oppose the wickedness with the extent of strength. He categorically declared that he is prepared to sacrifice non-violence for the sake of truth. Gandhi was not alike with Tolstoy and other anti-violence thinkers. He was not a complete pacifist because he believed that some kind of violence is a necessary feature of human life.

It is an erroneous belief that the violence and non-violence are contrary, one can abandon the other. In reality, they are the apparatus of social change in our present life. It is not historical to assume that violence attains nothing since it needs more accomplishments for its recognition. Above all Gandhi declared that, in prolonged practice, non-violence is probably to be more creative than violence. As per the Gandhi's conviction, non-violence is not a negative virtue. It is not only mere abstention from violence or hurting. It is a positive state of love or doing good to others even to the evil-doer. It will not support the evil activities. It opposed the evil actions without abhorrence or harm to the individual. Therefore he said that hate the sin, but not the sinner is the fundamental principle of non-violence. It is not possible to equate the Gandhi's concept of non-violence with inaction or non-action. It is neither resignation from fighting against wickedness nor a mere submission to the will of the evil-doer. It is an active condemnation of untruth, without violence, anger or malice. It is an active fight against all

⁹⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Vol.II, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1957, p.63.

⁹⁷. *ibid*, p. 7.

wickedness or putting one's soul against the will of the tyrant to win over him by love. Non-violence in its positive sense implies sacrificing one's own life for the sake of truth. Thus, the philosophy of non-violence aimed at reconstructing, remoulding and reshaping the human nature. Gandhi believed that man is a part of God or the same divine spark resides in all people. Hence every man is potentially divine in his nature. Human beings are basically same and they share general derivation and general fortune. While the same strength of mind or divinity exists in all men, the opportunity of transforming the meanest of men cannot be ruled out. Gandhi holds that if one attains his objective then it is probable for all men to achieve it. Therefore, it is concluded that the violence refuses or minimize the possibilities of human perfection in worldly life by demolishing the man instead the non-violent means convert the opponent towards meaningful life.

Forms of Satyagraha

Satyagraha as a socio-economic and political weapon, Gandhi insisted that, it is based on truth and non-violence. This soul-force takes various forms depending upon the circumstances.

Satyagraha is a means of resistance and conflict. It has different forms. They are:

Civil Disobedience

Non-Cooperation

No Destruction

Hunger strike (fasting)

Hartal (striking work)

Hijrat (immigration) are some of the forms.

The principles, conditions and qualifications of Satyagraha are relevant to all these forms.

Civil Disobedience

Civil Disobedience is one of the forms of opposition available to the public which is established on the basis of majority rule. One among few others, like legitimate public demonstrations, purposeful corruption of law for the sake of court precedents, violent, specifically military resistance, etc. Civil Disobedience is a form of democratic opposition. Civil disobedience is certainly on the bases of social model, which is generally called- after Henrich Bergson and Karl Popper- “the open society”. According to this type, societal organizations are measured as the outcomes of social creativity. They argued in terms of strength for consumption of human ambitions and objectives. The idea of civil disobedience was taken from Thoreau. It is a protest against unjust laws explains the validity of civil disobedience as a political tool. Gandhi said that “when you have failed to bring the error home to the lawgiver by way of petition and like the only remedies open to you if you do not wish to submit to error, are to compel him to yield to you either by physical force or by suffering in your person, by inviting the penalty for the breach of his laws. Hence, satyagraha largely appears to the public as civil disobedience or civil resistance.”⁹⁸ It is a form of non-violent revolt against unfair laws of the state. The thought of civil-disobedience is based on the standard that human being is greater to all the social organizations he has created. The individual has a spirit and conscience, whereas the institutions are soulless machines. Therefore, the voice of conscience is a matter of duty for man. According to Gandhi “Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every state puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes if it does not.”⁹⁹ It is further described as “the civil resister violates the unjust laws of the state in order to bend the

⁹⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 01.14.1940.

⁹⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 05.01.1922, p. 5.

government to the will of the people. It includes hartal (agitation), picketing, peaceful marches, no-tax campaigns, breach of laws and ordinances, courting arrests, boycott of legislative bodies, resignation of titles and non-cooperation with government and so on.”¹⁰⁰ Gandhi distinguishes between forced and willful disobedience of the laws.

Non-Cooperation

Another form of Gandhian concept of satyagraha is Non-Cooperation. This form was widely used by Gandhi in India’s political struggle against British. Non-cooperation as a method of political action Gandhi said that “Non-violent non-cooperation as a method whereby we cultivate the fresh public opinion and get it enforced when there is complete freedom of opinion, that of the majority must prevail.”¹⁰¹ Non-cooperation is an expression of one’s anguish rather than anger. Non-cooperation stands for withdrawal of cooperation from all evil practices of individuals and institutions. It is a prelude to cooperation on honourable terms. It is an attempt to awaken the masses to a sense of their dignity and power. It is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation. It includes strikes, hartal (agitation), boycott of offices, meetings and processions etc. When non-cooperation alone does not work, satyagraha becomes assertive and takes recourse to direct action. According to Gandhi non-cooperation is the very active principle against social and political evils. He said that “Non-co-operation is not a passive state, it is an intensively active state, more active than physical resistance or violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore, neither punitive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred.”¹⁰² This is may be sometimes uncomfortable to his point of view. He said, “Satyagraha movement is not started with the

¹⁰⁰. Satyanarayana, Y. V., *Ethics: Theory and Practice*, Dorling Kindersley, 2010, p. 38.

¹⁰¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 24.11.1921.

¹⁰². Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 25.08.1920, p. 322.

intention of embarrassing a government while ordinary political agitation is often started with that object. And yet, if a satyagrahi finds his activities resulting in embarrassing the government, he will not hesitate to face it.”¹⁰³

Fasting

Another significant and novel form of satyagraha developed by Gandhi in politics is fasting. This weapon is very much dependent upon the soul-force of the person yielding it. According to Gandhi, Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It is one of the important and most efficacious weapons used in Satyagraha movement. Self-suffering or self-sacrificing of a blameless person is the most powerful weapon to convert or change the heart of the opponent. “Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere limitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.”¹⁰⁴ It is accepted as a plea to the good sense of the person, or to evoke the best in him against whom it is intentional. It is said to be the most powerful technique in armoury of Satyagraha that the fasting unto death. Through his practical experience with fasting, Gandhi frequently cautioned people that it could be used only with greatest diplomacy because fasting unto death often leads to violence. Gandhi observes: “Fasting unto death is an integral part of Satyagraha programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances.”¹⁰⁵ Gandhi pointed out the nature and qualification of the practitioner of fasting such as “It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God.

¹⁰³. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 04.02.1920.

¹⁰⁴. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.03.1939, p. 56.

¹⁰⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 26.07.1942, p.248.

It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere limitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.”¹⁰⁶ This is the very potential and not an easy task. The faith in god or truth is more important than the physical ability. Gandhi himself used this weapon in the field of politics very successfully.

Salient Features of Satyagraha

- i. The essential principle of Satyagraha is not to obliterate or wound the adversary, but to convert or win him by love, compassion, endurance and self-suffering.
- ii. It is based on the metaphysical conviction that the oppressor may have power over the body and material assets of a Satyagrahi, but not greater than his spirit. Hence the soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned.
- iii. Satyagraha, as a means of social action, is based on a strong moral substance. Self-suffering is its unique temperament which differentiates it from all other forms of violent techniques of action. Self-suffering is considerably better and influential than the law of the Jungle for converting the adversary and breaches his ears to the voice of reason.
- iv. In a comparison a single Satyagrahi's self-sacrifice is thousand times more powerful and reasonable than the million non-Satyagrahi's self-sacrifice in war like killing activities
- v. Satyagraha abstains from evil activities stimulate and encourage everyone in peace making through love, compassion, benevolence and doing good to others even our opponents.
- vi. Satyagraha considered as the method for reconstructing, remoulding, and reshaping human nature through moralize human activities.

¹⁰⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.03.1939, p. 56.

- vii. It is not possible to compare the Non-violent non-cooperation with inaction or non-action. It is a vigorous denunciation of untruth, without violence, annoyance or hatred. It is a tireless struggle against all evil or pitting of one's soul against the will of the tyrant to win him by love.
- viii. The concept of Satyagraha has the wider scope in its application in the social movements where there is no hate or anger and violence.
- ix. The most important characteristics of Satyagraha lies in making awareness and consciousness among the masses, educating about the socio-economic and political condition of the time, preserving the unity apart from diversities among the masses, converting them as the fearless soldiers, establish the common platform and strong organization and then give direction to them to non-violent struggle against the evils.
- x. The multi-class or non-class character of Satyagraha movement is distinct from other methods which mainly consist of the same class.

Thus the fundamental aspiration of the Satyagraha movement is to make conscious awareness on the socio-economic and political oppression, exploitation and domination. It tries to provide suitable general front to organize the masses for the common causes then concert this as a strong organization against the exploiters and dominators. In the theoretical as well as the practical nature, Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha has essential necessity for a revolution with the non-violent means. Satyagraha opens all the possible ways to one's realization in the social life. It is not possible to adjust with evil activities where the revolt will automatically taken place against the exploitative and dominative social order. Gandhi, as a man of practical affairs, envisaged this possibility and rightly predicted that.

Concept of Democracy

The best definition given by the then American President Abraham Lincoln, on democracy is 'the government of the people, for the people and by the people'. As per the Lincoln's word, this is a best form of government where there is less interference in the autonomy of each and every individual, where people's power rest on the individual and each one realizes he or she is the real master of one's self. Therefore people are independent in a democracy but in a parliamentary democratic system, the party system has an imperative role yet Gandhi was extremely critical of the parliamentary democracy and he called the British Parliament as a 'sterile women and a prostitute' in his monumental book 'Hind Swaraj'. Although for him good government is no substitute for self-government. In this system people are connected with the system directly as well as indirectly at every level; it offers utmost opportunity to the people for their advancement or growth. Above all people can decide the mode of their welfare. And it is for this reason that today a gigantic fraction of the world happens to be under democratic system of government.

The stateless democracy desired by Mahatma Gandhi completely based upon non-violence, more or less supports the system of the day on one hand and he desired to work incessantly for enhancement in it in the anticipation of the domain of Ahimsa. It is an essential improvement because democracy is an artificial institution and all the artificial institutions are not out of risk; according to time and space it is a subject to improvement. Democracy cannot be an exception. Mahatma Gandhi said that "There is no human institution but has its dangers. The greater the institution, the greater the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and, therefore, it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to a minimum."¹⁰⁷ In the system of democracy there are much more possibilities for abuse. The conflicts in various bases and other quarrels also have the

¹⁰⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 07.05.1931.

inevitable scope in it. Here the question is: how can one be free and liberal from the conflicts in a democratic system? In my understanding through the non-violence the ripeness of the organ of democracy or the democratic organizations have full scope to make democracy as healthy one. If democracy is healthy there will be less possibilities of conflicts in it. This is the first thing that can be proclaimed openly. Democracy is an unfeasible thing to anticipate the power sharing by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. It is possible for even an outsider, a labourer to earn sufficient for their lives while they have been sharing in self-government. But they have to feel for others life, moving with others in social life and see others settlements and circumstances where they live like packed. It is possible for us to make others lives happy or mar others lives.

While discussing about Gandhi's concept of democracy automatically the question arises before us and that is how Gandhian way of democratic institutions can gain maturity? To answer this question, the understanding and analysis about Gandhi's conception on the basic tenets of democracy is obligatory of which representation and public views are of greatest importance. Representation and public views are part and parcel of the democratic government. Both have their imperative character in making good democratic government. He said that "Public opinion alone can keep a society pure and healthy."¹⁰⁸ Gandhi considered that the public opinion is the necessary condition to maintain the society as pure and healthy and also he thought that the state should have ruling hand with the public opinion, he believed that "A popular State can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed."¹⁰⁹ That is why Gandhi preached it exclusively before the world. Basing on the representation Gandhi uttered that "I hold it to be an utter delusion to believe that a large number of delegates are in any way a help to

¹⁰⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 01.12.1920, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 30.07.1931, p. 199.

the better conduct of business, or that it safeguards the principle of democracy. Fifteen hundred delegates, jealous of the interests of the people, broadminded and truthful, would any day be better safeguard for a democracy than six thousand irresponsible men chosen anyhow. To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect and their oneness, and should insist on choosing, as their representatives, only such persons as are good and true.”¹¹⁰ It is fairly obvious in the above mentioned statement of Gandhi that the following two tangible points to be relevant to the representation, together with their significance in the system of democracy.

- It is enormously essential that the people’s consciousness for democracy and the role of representatives in this system.
- The carefulness in selecting the representatives for conduction of the democratic government.

According to Gandhi the number of delegates is not significant, rather than he expected the representatives should work for the maximum possible way for the welfare of the people. Then it is not a matter if they are few in numeral, because people’s interest is the main spirit of a democracy.

Secondly, it is the controlling factor of the nation and the government that fit in public opinion. That is to say, the healthy system is only possible through the healthy opinions of the public and the denial is quite difficult by the state. Gandhi supported this in his own words as ‘A popular state can never act in advance of public opinion; if it goes against it, it will be destroyed.’

¹¹⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1927, P. 369.

It is a fact that the success of the democracy depends upon strong criticism which should be well informed, impartial and matured that is the spine of public life. The deficiency of critical analysis leads to failure of the realization of democracy and its feature. Therefore, there is always a need to make the people conscious. The public expects making the people in the government familiarized in this regard. Even then, if the government does not work in accordance with the ambitions of people then it must be aware of their power. So it can be said that without the wish of public opinion any nation or government cannot exist. One may question that how can we generate the healthy and matured public opinion? Gandhi answered that right education is the only probable way to bring the highly matured public opinion. That is why Gandhi had accentuated on right and true education. He indicated that public opinion will go to reverse order if right education is not given. It will be the intolerable circumstance in the absence of right education. To quote Mahatma Gandhi himself: "Healthy public opinion has an influence, of which we have not realized the full significance...Public opinion becomes intolerable when it becomes violent and aggressive."¹¹¹ The future of democracy depends upon our capability to deal with the multiface social problems and this capability can be attained through the communal events aimed at the good of all. This denotes the sharing of reciprocal responsibilities for regulation and welfare of the individual as well as for common inter-dependence. Since democracy visualizes a dynamic society, where public will be the part of decision-making authority in its ruling process, critical thinking and decision-making are the two vital qualities of the members of a democratic society. The upcoming of democracy depends on our accomplishments in getting along. Now and then people illustrate bold lines when they think to be like themselves. People should affirm their own individual and group identities, respect and appreciate the identities of others. If people come face-to-face with the pessimistic results of

¹¹¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 07.05.1931, p.103.

injustice and abhorrence, they have to examine their own lives. To understand this properly, primarily we should maintain tolerance.

For the successful functioning of democracy, public representation is one of the necessary conditions; Gandhi conceived as, “The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude and should not exclude special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.”¹¹² In one occasion he said, I grasp it to be a complete illusion to believe that a huge number of delegates is in any way of help to the better behavior of business or it preserves the principle of democracy. One thousand and five hundred delegates, envious of the interests of the public, tolerant and honest, would any day be a better preserve for democracy for democracy than six thousand reckless men selected anyhow. Gandhi said that “People in a democracy should be satisfied with drawing the Government's attention to mistakes, if any. They could remove the Government if they wished to. But they should not obstruct them by agitating against them. Ours is not a foreign Government having a mighty army and navy to support them. They have to derive their strength from the people.”¹¹³ There are three imperatives that peoples own; the enthusiastic sense of liberty, self-respect and unity to preserve the democratic system. They should be firm on selecting their representatives only such persons who ever good and true. It is said that hardly any people represent the spirit of contradiction with a true democracy. I is believed that it is not possible to get balanced development by aggressive method for democracy. The spirit of democracy comes from the inclusiveness and not from the ever exclusiveness.

¹¹². Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 22.04.1939, p. 99.

¹¹³. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 26.10.1947, p. 382.

In democratic governance, the principle of majority plays the key role; the scale of the establishment of democracy is the decision of the majority. In such a situation whatever majority decides, should it be accepted? Gandhi said that to some extent the decision of large amount of people should be definitely taken for approved; one should yield to the majority in matters of details. The individual's liberty should be carefully protected in democracy. If the liberty of the person is not protected or if it is violated then, Gandhi believed that "Minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority."¹¹⁴ Despite the principle of majority applied in democracy of the day, Gandhi wished for the society, which is free from exploitation with the co-operation of majority and minority. For the establishment of his ideal society he suggested that "Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extreme and become slaves to resolution of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form. If rights of minorities are to be respected, the majority must tolerate and respect their opinion and action...It will be the duty of the majority to see to that the minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insult."¹¹⁵ Further he thought that "Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is as intolerant as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument."¹¹⁶ To determine the aforementioned propositions of Gandhi, it is essential that before any legislation, well planned, it should be patiently deliberated that democracy demands patient instructions before legislation.

¹¹⁴. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 02.03.1922, p. 129.

¹¹⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 08.12.1921, p. 403.

¹¹⁶. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 26.01.1922, p.54.

Rights and Responsibilities

In a civil society each and every individual is the basic unit, we can say that the society builds on individuals. In a democracy the individual has the most important role because it is the governance of the people, for the people by the people. In this type of democratic government, the individuals have equal rights and duties. The rights and responsibilities of the people have major role in defining one's personality. We have various levels of responsibilities in our day today life. Individual responsibility and civil involvement with others are the traits that grow with the opportunities to share the mutual tasks in a democracy. According to Gandhi "In true democracy every man and woman has to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform, like charity must begin at home."¹¹⁷ These responsibilities should be accomplished in an arranged manner for the wellbeing of the cluster. The work should include individual independence and individual rights while accommodating the responsibility to uphold the group orderliness. Gandhi was preoccupied with individual honesty and the blame of a person. He had great regard in making the collective discipline and the moral compromises for the sake of nation. He asserted that each citizen of the state must be responsible for his actions and there is not even a single possibility to avoid or reduce the responsibilities.

The equality in access of rights by all is the necessary condition to enjoy the freedom in democracy. Gandhi's denotation of freedom comes from inter-dependence on the socio-economic, political and moral spheres. There is a condition in sharing's the democratic values that is the absence of the discrimination in any basis. Every individual should be ready to perform his duties so as to obtain rights. There by Gandhi considered that rights are always

¹¹⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 14.07.1946, p. 220.

derived from the duties, the later is the source of the former. If someone discharges his duties, rights are not far from him. Further he said that if anybody is striving for rights without performing the duties it is not accepted. He has explained as “If instead of insisting on rights everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. I venture to suggest that Rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having.”¹¹⁸ Equality is placed at the highest state in a democracy; but rights also cannot be the exception of it. If there are no equal rights for each and everyone, there is no possibility of proportionate progress and in such a state no democracy can survive for a long. It is a well-known fact. So, before having a desire to acquire rights, everyone should be ready to perform his/her duties. It is the best way even to strengthen the edifice of democracy as well as to run it on the path of Ahimsa-the non-violence shown by Mahatma Gandhi. However, in his view it was incorrect to say that an isolated individual had no wider significance. For Gandhi it was the citizen’s sense of moral responsibility for his own actions that ultimately determined the character of the state. People were responsible for one another and if one of them turned delinquent, the rest could not disown their equal responsibility for his behavior. Even as a wrongdoer must search his conscience, the others must probe theirs. Gandhi pointed out “In democracy, the individual will is government and limited by the social will which is the State, which is government by and for democracy. If every individual takes the law into his own hands, there is no State. It becomes anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State, that way lies destruction of liberty. Therefore, you should subdue your anger and let the State secure justice.”¹¹⁹ It is the deliberate and sore working process that bring out the merging sense of humanity, thus the ethical foundation in the society is a necessary collective responsibility.

¹¹⁸. Gandhi, M. K., 06.07.1947, P. 217

¹¹⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 28.09.1947, p. 350.

According to Gandhi every individual is responsible for the actions of his government. The citizen is a party to its actions and partly responsible for their results. It is not possible for the citizen to conceal behind the frontage of collective responsibility, it does not replace individual's responsibility.

Justice and Punishment

No democracy can be excluded from conflicts because it is the man made institution. How democracy to be free from offenses? It may be small or big committed by an individual, no matter if generally this term is used for a legal crime. If the commitment of crime is there, there must be provision for punishment. But the question is how much the punishment will be? And what type of punishment will be given in the democratic system to accord justice to all concerned? As per answering these questions Gandhi holds his own views and his commitment for non-violence as we can assume it from his important following remark on redemption: "I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin; I seek to be redeemed from sin itself or rather from the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless."¹²⁰ There is no doubt that the human nature with peccadillo deliberately or accidentally has to meet the worldly life. Living without sin is impossible for human beings. So it is unavoidable condition that one should encounter the consequences of sin if he committed a sin. Therefore by committing crime, the provision of punishment is a must. But it must be of such a nature that could accord a chance to the offender to reform or revise him in the future. It has more scope in Gandhian philosophy. It leads to the matured state of democratic institutions with healthy and strong democracy. Mahatma Gandhi is of the firm opinion that, if there is a

¹²⁰. Kamath, M. V., *Gandhi: A Spiritual Journey*, Mumbai: India Source Books, 2007, p. 22.

possibility to reform the human being, he must not be deprived of that opportunity. That is why he is in support for abolishing the provision of capital punishment altogether.

Now, I draw the conclusion from the above analysis that democracy is not the exception of drawbacks-though temporary in nature, smaller or bigger-in the same manner the other walks of human life can be made free to a large scale, if not completely to some extent through its mature and healthy organs or institutions. In this regard there is a need to awaken the masses and making the system responsible in practice as much as possible. There must be possibilities and provisions for reforms at all levels. In fact, reforms are the signs of development. An institution like democracy depends on reforms much more in comparison to others, because its responsibilities are greater than any other political institution to achieve its goal, if not fully, to the maximum possible extent. So, Mahatma Gandhi's suggestions to create democracy which is matured and healthy is a valuable thought; through that, definitely there will be possibilities of growth and gaining strength. And no doubt that the deep rooted or strengthened democracy, accord well to all; it can grant considerable relief from all kinds of conflicts to the people.

Decentralization

Decentralization is a concept of power sharing at all levels. It has various forms and dimensions like political, economic and administrative due to the pre-condition of centralized power structure. It is the essential part of the democratic system of government. Very similar to this conception, Bertrand Russell pointed about Gandhi's concept of decentralization: In those parts of the world in which industrialism is still young, the possibility of avoiding the horrors we have experienced still exists. India, for example is traditionally a land of village communities. It would be a tragedy if this traditional way of life with all its evils were to be suddenly and

violently exchanged for the greater evils of industrialism and they would apply to people whose standard of living is already low. Therefore, one has to understand the magnitude of those 'horrors' of which Russell speaks, before one can truly appreciate Gandhi's idea of decentralization. According to Gandhi, men should do their actual living and working in communities. They permit genuine self-government and the assumption of personal responsibilities, federated into larger units in such a way that the temptation to abuse great power should not arise. The larger a democracy grows, the lesser becomes the rule of the people and the smaller is the way of individuals and localized groups in dealing with their own destinies. Political decentralization prevents massive concentrations of political power in the hands of too few; rather, to distribute it in the hands of many. Gandhian political order takes the form of a direct, participatory democracy, operating in a tier structure from the base of village-level tier upwards through the district and state levels ultimately to the national and international levels. Decentralization is one of the fundamental basic principles in Gandhian political philosophy.

Values of Democracy

Basically democracy has very deep and welfare oriented values. These are:

Life: It is the basic right and fundamental possession of the individual.

Liberty: It is the freedom of the individual. It reflects on the personal as well as socio-economic and political freedom of the person. This includes the freedom with regard to groups, own beliefs, ideas and opinions. The democratic system provides the right to express their opinions in public to the people.

Personal Freedom: There should not be any restriction or control by the government as far as the individual's personal freedom is concerned.

Political Freedom: It is the right of the person to participate in political process and activities of the country.

Economic Freedom: It is the right that ensure the activities of buying, selling and trading of private property and the right to employment without any interference from any angle.

The Pursuit of Happiness: It is said to be the individual's right to be happy in his own way without any interference of others.

Common Good: It is the right of the individual participating towards the welfare of the community or Working together for the benefit of all.

Justice: It compels the people and institutions to treat fairly in fulfilling the obligations of society. It restricts the individual or institution in favor of one over other.

Equality: It is the fundamental value in democracy. It says that each and everyone have the right to enjoy the Political, Legal, Social and Economic Equality. Everyone has the right to the same dealing without any kind of variations such as race, caste, class, gender, religion, heritage, language and ethnicity.

Diversity: There may be dissimilarities in the country based on culture, attire, language, tradition and religion. They can be tolerated and celebrated as strength.

Truth: Both government and the people should not lie. The government should reveal the information to the people about their grievances and demands.

Popular Sovereignty: The government is not apart from the people. All the powers of the government are deriving from the people only. So they are the ultimate authority over the government.

Patriotism: It is the kind of feeling or love or devotion of the country and its values. The people may show it by words or actions.

Concept of Swaraj

The term 'Swaraj' initially used by Dadabhai Naoroji and Balgangadhar Tilak in political scenario for attaining the national Independence. The idea of 'Swaraj' or self-rule is one of the philosophical principles of Gandhian teachings, which stimulate man in conquering complete individuality and also reorganization of the society. Gandhi holds that self-rule or 'Swaraj' was nothing but self-determination of the individual while taking decisions without depending upon others. Gandhi used this term Swaraj with a definite meaning and significance. He wrote Swaraj as "a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which independence often means."¹²¹ Gandhi said that swaraj is an all satisfying goal for all time. The major ingredients of swaraj are;

(A) Decentralized participatory democracy

(B) The spiritualization of politics and economics.

The other words for swaraj are integration of politics and economics with the principles of truth (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa). The idea of 'Swaraj' first dwells in the individuals and will be manifested in his actions. Then an individual will be free to become what he desires; similarly, the 'Swaraj' of people decide their target. Therefore, his idea of 'Swaraj' though has a political meaning; it is grounded in the individual. According to Gandhi, an individual with simplicity and without selfishness can guide others. He said that this is nothing but assimilation of individual's self-rule into communal self-reliance. The word 'Swaraj' is different from

¹²¹. Rathnam Chetty, K. M., *Sarvodaya And Freedom A Gandhian Appraisal*, New Delhi: Discovering Publishing House, 1991, p.69.

independence. The meaning of the concept independence may be the free will of doing anything with his desires. But the concept of Swaraj is based on the self-discipline of the individual. It is the moral autonomy of the individual, which depends upon the self-purification of one's own, which brings the power to make one's claims practically. Gandhi wrote that how the sense of Swaraj is based upon the change in the people. He also affirmed that it is a Vedic word, which signifies self-rule and self-restraint. Gandhi made the transformation of the concept of Swaraj in two ways; it is a way of inner thinking and it is a way of outer action. Swaraj can not be a gift, given by somebody. It is the product of our own awareness and self-effort. Thus, recognizing our weaknesses is the precondition to understand the external threat to our freedom. Then we can eliminate our weaknesses through understanding. As a result the individual or the Government cannot be controlled if we were not weak. Gandhi made the deep analysis on the concept of Swaraj anticipated to highlight the national freedom or collective self-rule on the basis of individual self-rule. While there was the concept of Swaraj before Gandhi's appearance in the Indian freedom movement, he insisted on individual Swaraj because after independence he found that the real Swaraj has not been achieved.

Gandhi contrasted with state government. He favored the self-government. It is a fact that his Swaraj is meant for self-government. This idea is based on the spiritual thinking that anything authentic and real can come only from within. In the moral understanding that is to say that all good comes from within, nothing can be forced from exterior. Anything forced from exterior overseas the human nature and cannot be called moral. Explaining his idea of self-government Gandhi said. "Self-government means continuous efforts to be independent of the government control whether it is foreign or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if

people look up for the regulation of every detail of life.”¹²² Even though Gandhi had realized himself that it is neither possible fully to eradicate the state nor possible to stop the use of force in practical life. For that reason, he thought that the state and the government may exist and yet their powers should be abridged to minimum. He held that, “I admit that there are certain things which cannot be done without political power, but there are numerous other things which do not all depend upon the political power. That is why a thinker like Thoreau said that, that government is best which governs the least. This means that when people come into possession of political power the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much state interference is truly democratic. Where such condition is absent the form of government is democratic in name.”¹²³ Swaraj, which is based on non-violence, is not necessary to know about the rights but the people should know about their duties. Here the duties can be merely as duties but they are considered as the corresponding rights. Which are flowing from the recital of one’s duties, they are considered as the true rights. Therefore rights of true nationality accumulate people who serve the nation to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accumulate with them. But the result of these rights in practice is destructive to the exerciser and society. At that same time to the observer of the truth and non-violence becomes prestigious and it brings rights. If the people acquired rights as a consequence of the recital of duty, they must exercise the rights only for the service of society never for self purpose. The meaning of people’s Swaraj is the self-rule of the individual in its extent level of socioeconomic, political and moral spheres. Such self-rule comes only by the fulfillment of the individual’s duties

¹²². Bharathi, K. S., *Thoughts of Gandhi and Vinoba: A Comparative Study*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1995, p.100.

¹²³. Gandhi, M. K., *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol-62, New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1975, p. 92

clubbed with the national feelings. Here there is no way to think about one's rights because the rights automatically join with the duties for better performance. Gandhi pointed out the nature of the Swaraj which is based on non-violence. No one can be the enemy of anyone in it. Everyone should contribute his own proportion for the common good. There will not be any restriction to anybody to read, write and their knowledge keep on growing from day by day. Disease and malady will be reduced to its minimum level when there is self-rule and self-reliance. The public employment will be ensured by its core concepts of Kadi and trusteeship: the system of economic power sharing. The rich can use their properties wisely and usefully for the good of the society and cannot spend them for their increasing needs and worldly enjoyments. In such a moral based society or a government there is no place to social evils of betting, drinking and immorality. In the system of non-violent Swaraj the justice and rights will be protected at that same time no one can violate over others rights and cannot utilize unjust rights over others. It is a well organized state of equality, justice, self-rule, self-reliance and individual autonomy based on morality.

Dimensions of Swaraj

Gandhi used the term swaraj both at the individual and national levels. The individual swaraj means rule over one's self. Control over one's lust is the main condition for individual swaraj. In national level Gandhi meant that national self-rule in the fields of social, political, economic and moral. Society is nothing but the collection of the individuals so the individuals have major role to succeed as good. He said that, "At the individual level swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing swadeshi or

self-reliance.”¹²⁴ Therefore Gandhi has suggested individual self-rule before the national self-rule, because each and every individual is the constituent parts of the whole nation. As per the Gandhian vision, individual swaraj leads to the national swaraj. According to Gandhi control of one’s lust is necessary to individual swaraj, no man can rule over himself without smashing the lust within him. Gandhi thought that by educating the masses it will be possible to accomplish self-rule, he says, “Real swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”¹²⁵ At the national level Swaraj means national self-rule. Gandhi makes clear definition on Indian swaraj, that is totally indigenious and shuns all invitations of other countries. He has described it as Ramraj, i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Gandhi wrote that, “By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed. To the service of the state and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters.”¹²⁶ In addition to this he said that, “The Swaraj of my.. our.. dreams recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor it is to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is for all, including the farmer, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the striving, toiling millions.”¹²⁷ In Gandhian vision of Swaraj, there is no place for any kind of disparities; he says no swaraj is possible without the removal of untouchability. The national swaraj ensures the equality, freedom of the people.

¹²⁴. Arora N. D. and Awasthy, S. S., *Political Theory and Political Thought*, New Delhi: Har- Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, 2007, p. 387.

¹²⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 29.01.1925, p. 41.

¹²⁶. *ibid.* p. 41.

¹²⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 05.01.1930.

Gandhian concept of swaraj has various dimensions depending upon various fields of national life. These are like political, social, economic and moral swaraj. In the field of politics swaraj means just like an individual is fit to eat, to drink and to breath. The nation must possess the strength to rule over itself. He observed that “By political independence I do not mean an imitation of British House of Commons or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule if Italy or the Nazi of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours.”¹²⁸ Therefore Gandhi suggested decentralization of political power to all. He says that mere transfer of political power is not swaraj, we must establish our own style of governing body with well disciplined representatives and non-violent moral based principles. According to Gandhi economic swaraj means self-sufficient individual, village and national economic freedom and also that means decentralized economic power to all. By his teachings of swaraj he wanted to eradicate the sect of haves and have nots and try to establish economy based on self-reliance. That’s why Gandhi preached khadi, spinning wheel and trusteeship for self-depended economic power. Gandhi has wished-for our own tradition, culture and moral principles instead of western coercion culture and machinery principles.

Village Swaraj

Gram Swaraj or village self-rule is an essential thought in Gandhi's thinking. The villages and the villagers are the centres of Gandhi's thinking. As far as India's social and political institutions were concerned, he dreamt for this kind of social and political institutions for India. With all his ideas, Gram Swaraj should be understood and viewed within the context of the twin beacons of Truth and nonviolence. In 1942 Gandhi wrote, the basic tenet of Gram Swaraj. Every village should be its own republic and then there should be both independence and inter-dependence.

¹²⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 02.01.1937, p. 374.

Independence should be with its vital wants and needs, at that same time there should be interdependence among the villages for other needs and desires. Each village should be fundamentally self-sufficient, making stipulation for all necessities of life - foodstuff, clothes, clean water, hygiene, accommodation and education etc, including the government and self-defence and all socially useful facilities required by a community. For example: a theatre and a public hall. For complete nation, full independence would mean that each village of India must be a republic with full powers. These may be revolutionary ideas. Nehru and other most of the Congress leaders could not understand the ideas of village republics and its needs. So they were not inspired. Though for Gandhi, independence of India in its real sense is a complete transformation of Indian society and polity. Nehru thought that it is not more than the political independence of India from English Imperialism. Nehru was acknowledged as Gandhi's political successor, but he was an orthodox democratic socialist. Of course, Nehru wanted to make India a modern, industrialized and democratic socialist nation or state. He believed that centralized, large-scale, heavy industries were essential if India has to develop, increase its wealth and become a modern nation. He did not see the virtue of small is beautiful. He had no thought of devolving significant governmental powers to individual villages and clusters of villages. It is perhaps not that Nehru did not agree with Gandhi's concept of Gram Swaraj, but he never seriously considered it. Nehru sympathized and agreed with some elements of Gandhi's programmes such as abolition of untouchability but Gram Swaraj was never in his agenda. There is a philosophical gulf between Gandhi and almost all of India's pinnacle political leaders. During the independence the Gram Swaraj was not integrated into India's constitution. India's socio-economic and political institutions were to be generally top down rather than bottom up. According to Gandhi political as well as economic life should be centered on villages

prearranged as innumerable oceanic circles as he visualized them, not as a pyramid with the millions of villagers at the bottom supporting elite at the apex. On the other hand, the Indian patriots like Nehru and the other elite were quite comfortable with their positions at the top. According to Gandhi, Independence must begin at the bottom. Therefore, the villages of India, each and everyone should be a republic or all Panchayats must have full powers, where self-reliance of the every village will prevail so that they will manage their affairs to the extent of defending against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Ultimately, it is the individual who will be the unit.

Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful crops, excluding ganja, tobacco, opium etc. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean supply. This can be done through controlled wells and tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no sectarianism like castes such as we have today with their graded Untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation. The register will be maintained by the village.

Gandhi was an activist, he worked for the upliftment of society. In the field of politics he understood the issues with special consideration based on Indian nature of socio-economic and politics. Thus he defined politics as the best means to regulate the national life and also he concluded that its power should decentralize in equitable manner. To him the wellbeing of every

individual is the end. He found various forms of satyagraha and non-violence are the best means to attain the ends. He formulated the significant theories in politics in order to attain his ultimate end of welfare of all. He thought that the state in concentrated form of power structure is more coercive than individual. So he suggested the political power decentralization in the democratic form of governance. Because decentralized democracy gives the scope to the public participation and representation. It ensures the liberty and autonomy to the individual, village and nation in its extensive application of the welfare world will be attainable.

Chapter IV

Conception of Political Decentralization

Introduction

The world with the modern advancement is getting wide range of changes in our time. In these circumstances individuals and groups in various bases, institutions like governmental and non-governmental and other organizations are moving towards more power in their hands. The attitude towards centralization is mainly due to the socio-economic and political motivations; these are domination and exploitation. The domination and exploitation has various levels; these are between the individuals, between the groups (caste, class, religion, ethnicity, language, etc) and over the nations. Through the analysis we can say that the attitude of the luxurious life, possessing more than our needs, our egoistic societal status and its preservation leads to the power centralization. Through the centralized power, the nation or any other institutions or individuals dominate and exploit the other for their fulfillment. It is a fact that “The rationale of decentralized governance is also derived from the known drawbacks of centralized decision-making at the macro governmental levels.”¹²⁹ In the present day context we are approaching the globalization. It is not a new thought or ideology but it is another name or form of the concept of power centralization. Globalization is as same as centralization and having all the dominative, exploitative and oppressive characters as its own. As an alternative to centralization and globalization, the philosophy of decentralization is a prime motive to distribute the equal powers

¹²⁹. Abdul Aziz and David D Arnold, “Introduction”, Abdul Aziz and David D Arnold, (eds.), *Decentralized Governance in Asian Countries*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, p. 14.

to all. So there will be equality in access of power and through the power sharing, the people are encouraging to participate in the public life and also in decision making process.

Decentralization

Decentralization is the power sharing process in it authority. It is restructured between government institutions at the central, regional and local levels with the transfer of power, responsibilities, functions and also with the public participation and representation in decision making and implementation from the lower level. The literal meaning of the decentralization is away from the centre. The classical definition of decentralization is “the extent to which power is held by autonomous elected sub national government capable of taking binding decisions in at least some policy areas.”¹³⁰ According to Webster’s Student Dictionary, decentralize means to reorganize a government by distributing authority to smaller or local units. Herman Finer explains that “decentralization is a system in which there are many centres of government, local and central, each with a recognized right of independent existence and functions.”¹³¹ The process by which all kinds of powers like legislative, judicial and administrative are transferred from a higher to lower levels is called decentralization. It is the transfer of responsibilities, competencies and decision-making power to administrative bodies at middle (territory, districts, regions) and lower levels (urban, municipalities, villages). Allen said that decentralization passes on to the methodical efforts to delegate to the lowest levels with authority except that which can only be worked out at central position. Balwantray Mehta study team defined decentralization as a process whereby the government divests itself completely of certain duties, responsibilities and devolves them in to some other authority. Though the central idea of decentralization is

¹³⁰. Sharma, Chanchal Kumar, *Decentralization Dilemma: Measuring the Degree and Evaluating the Outcomes*, 26. July 2004, online at <http://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/204/>, p. 53.

¹³¹. Herman Finer, *English Local Government*, London, Mathew and Company Ltd, 1945, p. 20.

distribution of the decision making power with lower levels in the organization, power should be distributed within the system, at a lower level, or by creating new mechanisms in the system.

Types of Decentralization

Decentralization is a power sharing mechanism; it has special characteristics, policy implementations and conditions for accomplishment. The types of decentralization consist of political, administrative, fiscal and economic. Drawing distinctions among these types is useful for highlighting many dimensions for successful decentralization and also creating coordination among them. These types are correlative and act as components in the process of decentralizing power. The process of decentralization is classified broadly as four types.

Political Decentralization: Focuses on the transfer of the responsibility and power by participating in the decision making, political self-determination and representation from the central government to subordinate levels of government, in particular for formulation and execution of policies.

Administrative Decentralization: It tries to find the redeployment among different levels of government; the decision-making power, authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services. It has additionally classified as three more forms as de-concentration, delegation, devolution for the successful decentralized administration.

(a) De-concentration: It is the weakest form of decentralization, which consists of redistribution of decision-making authority, financial and management responsibilities among different levels of the central government.

(b) Delegation: Through the delegation of central government and administration of public functions to semi- autonomous organizations that are not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it.

(c) Devolution: In this type, local government has clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions. This type of administrative decentralization underlies the perfect political decentralization.

Market Decentralization: It seeks to create a free market in which the government and industry cooperate and provide public services or infrastructure; privatization and deregulation are the core elements of market decentralization. The market decentralization further classified as two:

(a) Privatization: It is a process, that transfers all the responsibilities and power for its functions to the private sector or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or private enterprises, these are independent of the government.

(b) Deregulation: It is the process that the government gets back its particular rules and regulations of the industries and other institutions in order improve its outcome.

Fiscal Decentralization: It focuses on the transfer of revenues by the national government to subordinate levels of government, or allowing lower levels of government to raise their own funds; fiscal decentralization is the core component of decentralization.

Political Decentralization

Political decentralization is the process that delegates the power to all levels of its constitutional parts. It helps to reduce, control the interference of the central governments over its citizens in socio-economic, political and cultural life. It has aims to provide more power in public decision-

making to the public or their elected representatives. It is often connected with pluralistic politics and representative government, giving more influences to its citizens, or to their representatives in drawing and execution of policies. According to Richard Crook and James Manor (2000): decentralization is a general term to transfer the power and resources from higher to lower levels in a political system. The advocates of political decentralization assume that the decisions made with greater participation will be better informed and more relevant to diverse interests in society than those made only by national political authorities. It is the concept of power sharing that entails the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdiction and permits the citizens to know better about their political representatives and also allows elected officials to aware about the needs and desires of their constituents. Political decentralization often requires constitutional or statutory reforms, the development of pluralistic political parties, strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units along with the encouragement of effective public interest groups. The disadvantage of centralized decision making at the macro governmental levels is the basic cause to drive the political decentralization. Being away from the basic spatial units such as hamlets and villages with power concentration at the top like a pyramidic power base. The state and the union government power structures draw representatives from well endowed sub-regions. The sections of the community are the factors that lead to political decentralization. The fact that decentralized decision making ensures the well being of all of those who are likely to be affected by such decision is now well known. The rationale of this premise is derived from the political (democratic) imperative that their interests are interfered in the decision making process. When everybody takes part in the decision making process, self-interest will guide them while taking decisions that are consistent with everybody's good. This logic provides the

theoretical basis for the evolution of decentralized political institutions which are looked into the institutions that promote decentralized decision making.

Reasons to Endorsing Decentralization

There are large numbers of governmental forms that are existing for a longer period in accordance with the socio-economic, political and religious situation of that country or place around the world. Most of them are ruling with the centralized forms of governance like autocracy, aristocracy, monarchy, dictatorship and oligarchy etc. The levels of centralization of their power may be differing among them. In the earlier part I mentioned the drawbacks of the centralized form of the government. They support decentralized governance. That fact is validating by the following causes:

(A) Limitations of Centralized Governance:

There are many evidences around the world for the failure of the centralized form in respect of planning, implementation, developments activities of the government to reach the lower and rural communities. Because of this type of government the powers are concentrated in the central point or one or few hands. The power holders are the decision-makers who live in the urban areas, they do not know about local conditions and needs so they cannot mobilize the resources and cannot promote the equitable growth by bringing the poor into the mainstream of development. The centralized form of government does not have even a single representation or participation of officials from the side of lower, deprived and rural. By nature, in the centralized governance the powers in all kinds are concentrated in the urban and metropolitan cities so there is no chance for local and poor people to enjoy the benefits and development of the government. Decentralization is a way of mobilizing support for national development by interacting with people at the local level and taking their feedback. It affects a lot in the centralization of political

power with hierarchical social and political structure, which leads to the domination, exploitation and in turn they lead to the corruption and corruption ends with wide range of poverty in the society. The emergence of the poverty leads to conflicts. Conflicts cannot be resolved with the centralized governance. The decentralized governance ensures equal power sharing, participation, autonomy, liberty against domination, exploitation and corruption over all by few. According to Meenakshisundaram. S.S “it is possible to argue that ethics and other factors which result in a society make decentralization all the more necessary if the unity and integrity of the country are to be maintained. A share in decision-making strengthens the bond between the different ethnic communities living within a nation, instead of breaking it up. Further, even within the administration, any official can quote examples of centralized decision-making that was wasteful or ineffective: the funds and supplies that never arrived; the projects that remained paper proposal; the approvals that could not be obtained unless one had a friend or a relative in the central ministry. The experience gained in working a centralized system makes one realize the importance of decentralization.”¹³²

(B) Diversities of the State

Diversities are the important factors that lead to political decentralization. The states or nations around the world diversified in various bases like ethnicity, religion, territory, class, race, caste and gender. In these circumstances people with varied culture and tradition have different needs, demands, interests and ideologies. The centralized system of governance can not fulfill the demands of the various sects of the peoples. For that reason in the last few decades’ decentralization has emerged as an effective trend of politics. Decentralization is also advocated

¹³². Meenakshisundaram, S. S., *Decentralization in Developing Countries*, Jha. S.N. and Mathur. P.C., (eds.), *Decentralization and Local Politics*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999, p. 58.

with reference to the size and socio-economic complexity of the country. A large territory is not easy to administer from one end. It explains why states with large territories like Canada, China, USA, Australia and India have adopted federal forms of government. Local institutions can be the effective channels of communication between the central government and local communities. Due to the over concentration of power, the demands of greater political autonomy based on ethnicity and religion has risen in the regions such as Punjab, Kashmir and Assam in India. In Sri Lanka similar demand of the political autonomy raised on the bases of linguistic, the Tamil nationalist movement strives towards the political autonomy of their own. During the period of independence in India religious based partition was made between India and Pakistan. According to this partition most of the Hindu's resident regions will be India and the most Muslim's resident regions will be Pakistan. These are the political evidences for the contradiction between power centralization and diversities on any basis. The only and best option for diversified regions is: political decentralization. Because the decentralized government give all the possible rights to the minorities for their well being, "People's initiative is necessary for grassroots struggle, for justice and for self-determination by ethnic groups. Regional groups are more basic to decentralization of power. Local committees should be responsive to the urges of the people. People should fight for justice and against the structure of domination."¹³³ It is the fact that decentralized governance is very much consistent with diversified regions at the same time the centralized governance should not be in practice for a long period because unrest will prevail there.

¹³³. Rajni Kothari, *Issues in Decentralized Governance*, Abdul Aziz and David D Arnold, (eds.), *Decentralized Governance in Asian Countries*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, p. 40.

(C) Public Participation

The prolonged experience with the authoritarian governments and its effects like domination, exploitation, interference in individual's autonomy and liberty results the demand on decentralized democracy for its emergense. There is no scope for people's participation in the authoritarian governance, on the other hand the decentralized democracy ensures the people's participation. That is to say "The essence of political participation in a democracy appears to be beguilingly simple-it is about 'taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies'."¹³⁴ Public participation is important because controlling the government is only possible through the decentralized governing process that encourages the local government and public participation in the decision-making and implementation and also in promoting the public representation in the mechanism of the governance. The most important thing is even the marginalized and minorities also can participate in it so that each and every one have equal power and they can able to know the local situation, conditions and claim their needs and can have better access towards the benefits and development of the government. "Political participation involves actions through which ordinary citizens influence or attempt to influence political outcomes."¹³⁵ Decentralized democracy seems to be the democracy with in democracy; because, it has the local governing body within it. Greater people's participation in local development planning and management promotes national integration. The people of different regions of a country help in participating in the decision-making and their community development and also to have their support for political stability. The political participation brings the three fold potential benefits to the citizens. They are:

¹³⁴. George Moyser, *Political Participation*, Roland Axtmann, (ed), *Understanding Democratic Politics An Introduction*, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2003, p. 175. cited

¹³⁵. Robert P. Inman and Daniel L. Rubinfeld, Working Paper 6556, <http://www.nber.org/paper/w6556>, p. 2-3.

1. The first one is instrumental or utilitarian: James Mill and Bentham said that political participation provides a specific function. It should ensure maximization of the utility or welfare of the citizens in that government. It has got some instrumental value

2. The second one is educative or developmental: the thinkers like Aristotle, Rousseau, J.S. Mill, De Tocqueville and other contemporary thinkers like Dewey and Pateman supported that, the political participation brings the educative function also. The public can take the lesson about how the interest of the individual linked with the interest of the society in politics by participating in the process of politics. Through this knowledge the individuals will be willing to give the importance to the common good of the society instead of their own interests. Thereby we can promote the development of the society along with justice and equality.

3. Sometimes in special cases, political participation brings intrinsic or consumptive benefits to the participants of the politics. Some of the participants may perceive the sound of their influence or by controlling others. Those who get the real fulfillment by contributing to a reason definitely will have a personal consumption benefits.

The aforementioned reasons revealed decentralized governance as the political necessity to resolve the conflicts rose by the centralized governance. The changing world with the advancement of the science and information technologies creates awareness in day today affairs among people and in these circumstances they are emerging with new political and other ideologies. So in the modern period people are moving towards the individual or ethnic, religion, linguistic, caste and class autonomy of their own. It is evidenced from both developed and developing countries like USA, Canada, China, India, Philippines and so on. Like these countries the political demands on self-rule and self-sustenance are raising in the era of globalization. It is a fact that the life in the present world is the process of moving towards the centralized power in

a single or particular point, on the other hand it is aimed at achieving the liberty and autonomy through the power sharing or decentralization. These are the two contrary and just opposite points in the governing process in the politics. But the above reasons of the impossibility of the centralized form to confirm the local needs, necessities and the claims based on various diversities to their self-rule or autonomy and the political demand of the public participation and their representation lead to the philosophy of political decentralization.

Pre-Requisites for the Success of Political Decentralization

Generally any programme or activity will be successful depending upon the condition of the place and time. Favorable circumstances are the pre-condition for the success. In case of political decentralization there are some pre-conditions for its application and governing. The awareness about powers holding and power losses, interests on accessing power and its uses, demand on freedom from exploitation and domination over others are the first step. It applies to the powerless people also. The second step is willingness for power sharing in order to make peace with the understanding of the centralization of power that leads to the conflicts at any level and the gulf of haves and have nots is the root of the restless social situation, for the power holders. The third step is the most important one to engender the first two. This is done by the volunteers, whether it is political organization or party or non-governmental organizations or group of individual or individuals. They can work with the power losers to bring awareness and consciousness on socio-political affairs. In the same way they can generate moral and mental maturity to share the power with the losers, power holders and can teach about the equality and its features. The volunteers have the responsibilities to choose the right path that leads to the decentralized political order and also suitable form of government to create decentralized power structure such as political, economic and administrative etc. According to Manor, "Environment

building: suitable behavioural and psychological factors, Sufficient powers to exercise substantial influence within the political system and over significant development activities, Sufficient financial resources to accomplish important tasks, Adequate administrative capacity to accomplish those tasks; and Reliable accountability mechanisms-to ensure both the accountability of elected members to citizens and the accountability of government officials to elected members.”¹³⁶ The advantageous environment is the necessary condition to bring out the people in participatory decision making. Meantime the decision-making authority should have autonomy, that means one should not interfere in the decision-making process then only it will be successful. The success of political decentralization depends on its core element of economic decentralization. The decentralized small forms of government like local government such as Panchayat’s cannot depend upon the central government for the sake of financial needs. If it is not worked out properly it will demolish the value of decentralized government.

Intrinsic Values in Political Decentralization

The philosophy of political decentralization is having the inherent values of its own. These are the equality in power sharing, political participation and representation, self-rule, self-reliance and autonomy at various levels, liberty of the individual, local governments and immediacy between individual with government. Power sharing is the most crucial value of political decentralization in common, although maintaining the equality without any kind of variation based on the caste, class, religion, linguistic, ethnic and sex in its power sharing process is the miles stone of that philosophy. Because of the unequal distribution, power will knock down the value of political decentralization. Political participation and representation is the value of decentralization that encourages the participation and representation more from the lower level in the system of policy making and implementation. That is to say “The most immediate and less

¹³⁶. Gupta, D. N., *Decentralisation, Need for Reform*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2004, p.2. cited

doubtable outcome and value of decentralization is the promotion of participation of local people or their representative in the process of decision-making and implementation. In structuring decentralized governance this should always be adequately taken into account in order to avoid putting in place structures of decentralization that can easily facilitate the development of local dictatorship or centralized decentralization. Vertical decentralization should always be accompanied by horizontal decentralization to empower local people to participate in local governance and counter the tendencies of local dictatorship.”¹³⁷ The political participation is the activity through which the average people of the state influence or strive to influence the political results. When political decentralization is associated with democracy, it has two prized values: the first one is the small government and the second is proximity of public to their own government. The small governments like village, town and state can follow the philosophy of political decentralization because these small governments are the parts of the country. The small governments aimed at the best arrangements for knowing, understanding and resolving the lower level situations, demands, needs and local conflicts. Nearness of the people to their government seems to be another important value of political decentralization. In the democratic form of government through the equal power sharing each and every citizen has equal power in their hands, by that they can participate in most of the activities of that government and can control by their power. The values of decentralization are the freedom gained from the ability to participate in the basic societal decisions that affect one’s life, the creativity generated by the capacity to experiment in solving public problems and tailor the possible solutions to face the local needs. Political decentralization promotes two of the most appreciated values associated with democracy: small government with in that the proximity of citizens to their government.

¹³⁷. John Mary Kauzya, *Decentralization: Prospects for Peace, Democracy and Development*, in, <http://www.euroafricanpartnership.org>, p. 16.

Decentralization of political power begins from the above mentioned drawbacks of political power centralization. Decentralization distributes equal power to all. So there is no possibility for exploitation, domination, hierarchy and inequalities. These problems are solved by political decentralization. In a politically decentralized society there won't be any cause to raise these problems. Because the people enjoy equal quality of life. Unfortunately, if any problem arises, they can manage the problems through political powers. Here we can reduce army force; we can ensure individual freedom and empowerment. Here all people are having equal duties and responsibilities.

Western Conception of Political Decentralization

The philosophy of political decentralization has deep roots in Western tradition; it is evidenced from the great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and extending to Rousseau, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, Montesquieu and Jefferson. They were talking about the requirements of small governments and their values. Inman and Rubinfeld 1997: said that small government in the form of small territories has been admired since Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Montesquieu. These small unites of territory are regarded as appropriate to defend the individual rights against tyranny of the majority and encourage political participation. More or less on same lines, the civic virtues of local democracy are emphasized by liberal authors as Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill. According to Plato decentralization is the necessary condition to make the city better able to achieve the rule of law. During 17th and 18th centuries, the western political philosophers like Rousseau, Mill, Tocqueville, Montesquieu and Madison have suggested the small democratic units of the government to preserve the liberties of free men by the distrust of the autocratic central government. Thereby Tocqueville reminded us that “Municipal institutions constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what

primary schools are to science: they bring it within the people's reach they teach men how to use and enjoy it. A nation may establish a free government, but without municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty."¹³⁸ Mill corroborates this argument by pointing out that 'free and popular municipal institutions' are part of the 'peculiar teaching of a national, the realistic part of the political education of a free people.'

Rousseau and Montesquieu thought in terms of the problem of security in small political dominions. They become a subject of study in conjunction with the susceptibility of small political units to subjugation. Rousseau repeats the question as it was formulated in the *Spirit of the Laws*: how to combine the external power of a large people with the easy policy and good order of a little state? Earlier in *Emile*, Rousseau argued the dangers of despotism and battle. The difficulties of the small republic can be conquered by forming leagues and confederations leaving each state its internal master, arms them externally against any unjust aggression. Prof. C.E.M. Joad also visioned the decentralized state for the existence of democracy. He said: "if men's faith in social action is to be revived the state must be cut up and its functions distributed. It must be made possible for the individual to belong to a variety of small bodies possessing executive powers, dealing both with production and with local administration, as a member of which he can once again feel that he counts politically, that his will matters, and that his work is really done for society ...it would seem, then, that the machinery of government must be reduced in scale, it must be made manageable by being made local, so that, in seeing the concrete results of their political labours before them, men can be brought to realize that where self-government is a fact, society is malleable to their wills because society is themselves."¹³⁹ To Aldous Huxley, decentralization and self-government is the only way for the enhanced society in

¹³⁸. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol I, New York: Vintage Books, 1945, p. 63.

¹³⁹. Joad, C. E. M., *Introduction to Modern Political Theory*, London: Oxford University press, 1946, pp. 120-21.

politics. According to James Mill (1773-1836), for both the individual and the government there is a possibility to misuse their power in attaining their selfish ends because by nature human beings attempt to secure their maximum pleasure. Since the government also consists of the human beings, necessary checks are to be made to avoid the danger of the misusing the power by the individual and also by the government. He saw that “English governmental system was open to abuses and thus was not ideal. The ideal system is a representative form of government in which the people have authority to check the actions of legislators and keep an eye on their activities. Individual interest must conform to those of community and both must go hand in hand. People’s representatives in the House of Commons should be vested with more power. There should be frequent appeals to the electorates.”¹⁴⁰ In this quotation we can find the root of the concept of political decentralization. He thought about representative government, role of the people and the power control and also other things related to the philosophy of political decentralization.

J.S. Mill (1806-1873) is the best supporter of the representative government. To him it should be based on the principle of liberty. According to him the representative government is the best in which controlling power or the sovereignty must rest in the hands of the least. To him the sovereign which is the expression of voice is not sufficient they must have the will power to discharge some public functions. He said that “... that the whole people, or some numerous portion of them, exercise, through deputies periodically elected by themselves, the ultimate controlling power, which, in every constitution, must reside somewhere. This ultimate power they must possess in all its completeness. They must be masters, whenever they please, of all the

¹⁴⁰. Sharma, S. K. and Urmila Sharma, *Western Political Thought*, Vol II, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2003, p. 31.

operations of government.”¹⁴¹ He supported the proportional representation for the success of the democratic government. In his thought the absolute authority of power will be in the hands of the individual or in the hands of the society. It is inconsistent with the rational liberty thereby he wants to work as the collective authority over the individual. These are the basic ideas of the decentralized democracy in my study. The American third president Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) supported the decentralized agrarian republic. According to him the strong central government is valuable for foreign relations, but it is not a necessary condition to uphold the other aspects of the national affairs. He had the fear on the tyranny. Jefferson’s concept of decentralization is the vertical type of decentralization, he called the Americans to divide and subdivide their republic into smaller units. He said that “It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man’s farm by himself; by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best.”¹⁴² Thomas Jefferson wanted to generate both political and economical equality among all individuals of the society. For that he took the concept of decentralization, it is very much ensured in localizing the political resources of the government. In his view the people who are interested and represented in democracy based on the decentralization, promote the individual liberty and economic equality in the broad base of the society.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1969), was very much supportive to self-government industries, individual freedom and decentralization. He believed that, decentralization creates new opportunities for the individual activities. He said that “Unless you are one of a very small number of powerful individuals, you are likely to feel that you cannot do much about these great

¹⁴¹. Mill, J. S., *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government*, Wildside Press LLC, 2007, p. 228.

¹⁴². Thomas Fleming, *The Politics of Human Nature*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2004, p.202.

issues. But in relation to smaller problems - those of your town or your trade union, or the local branch of your political party, for example – you can hope to have a successful influence.”¹⁴³

According to him to build the new world order, greater participation of the worker in the industry and a greater decentralization of the function of the state are more important. According to Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) ‘All Authority is Federal’, he attacked the state’s sovereignty theory. He said that “The state is not itself an end, but merely the means to an end, which is realized only in the enrichment of human lives. Its power and the allegiance it can win depend always upon what it achieves for that enrichment.... Realizable good means always some happiness won for the lives of persons, or it means nothing. Power, therefore, must seek the widest possible distribution of such happiness.”¹⁴⁴ That is to say that the state can not have control over the individuals but it can exercise the partial control over the lives of the individuals. He was fully against the power centralization, in his vision “to see power spilt up, divided, set against itself and thrown widespread among men by various devices of decentralization and he wants to be certain that the civil, economic, and social rights of individuals and groups are insured against the encroachments of those who exercise power.”¹⁴⁵

So he had the desire to prevent the power centralization in the single point or in the hands of the state. In western tradition many philosophers talked about the small governments, its inter-relations with one Another and the needs of the unity among them from Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Smith, Mill and so on. Here it can be understood that, they all affirmed the local and small governments and they praised the public participation in the political process.

¹⁴³. Bertrand Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, London: Routledge, 1992, p.363.

¹⁴⁴. Sharma, S. K. and Urmila Sharma, Op. cit, p. 357. cited

¹⁴⁵. *ibid*, p. 357. cited

Gandhian Philosophy of Political Decentralization

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the greatest mighty figures of the modern world. His approaches towards socio-economic, religious and political were quite contrast theories and won't represent others. He has practiced the principles or theories whatever he suggested. That is why he was called as Mahatma (the great soul). He was the practical idealist. He was the special humanist; he devoted his life in the realization of the ideal of non-violent society with equality, liberty, decentralization of power of all kinds, peace and justice free from the exploitation, domination, depression, variations, poverty and violence. As a political visionary and leader, he suggested many more concepts to the empowerment of the society. Among them the concept of political decentralization is the most important one in bringing the egalitarian society around world. Political decentralization according him is based on human nature and also on ethical grounds. It is aimed to bring the individual autonomy, village self-rule and enlightened anarchy. That is to say that it is the Sarvodaya (the rise of all in all aspects) world order; there is no scope for any kind of evil's such as domination, exploitation and other kinds of violence like depression and oppression.

The Conceptual Frame Work of Political Decentralization

The term decentralization is the most confusing and volatile term. It has various dimensions and approaches. So it has to be understood in a different ways. The common understanding of decentralization is: the process of power sharing or devolution of the authority, decision-making and implementing power. The political decentralization is the process, which transfers the powers and resources from the higher levels to lower levels (sub-national levels) in a political system. According to Gandhi political decentralization, means sharing the political power with the people without any kind of variation. It is an integrated political process by incorporating the

economic and moral principles. Through that the individuals can protect their lives and rights. It is the condition in which equality in sharing and non-violent means are necessary. DambarudharPattanaik said that, “Gandhian decentralization means the creation of parallel politics in which people’s power is institutionalized to counter the centralizing and alienating forces of the modern state.”¹⁴⁶ In this process it simultaneously acts to create the local or public institutions and control the state power. Because he thought that the higher degree of state power is the threatening force of citizens and their autonomy.

Methodology of Political Decentralization

Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization is based on the methodology of perpetual dialectics. The perpetual dialectics is the process that continuously moving with two or more differing forces or ideas. According to him, it is not only dialectically related to political power centralization, it is more relative to other kinds of contradictions and resolutions. For example: it is ever inclusive principle against centralization. By nature it includes ethical, religious, social and economic problems of social life. As a system of politics, it starts and ends with the concepts of truth. It is one of the major differences between Gandhi and Marx. Because Marx used the method of dialectics based on material; it is known as the dialectical materialism. According to him, economics is the only basic thing to the world of affairs and politics. But to Gandhi there are many things and these are inter-related and co-operative with one another. So he combined moral, economics, spiritual and cultural aspects with politics. In his vision, there is no difference between religion and politics in the way of realization. He considered that all political activities are related to religious activities. So his philosophy of political decentralization is based on the ultimate aim of realization of truth. This inclusive method of political decentralization is known

¹⁴⁶. Dambarudhar Pattanaik, *Gandhi and Decentralization*, Narayan Hazary, Subas Chandra Hazary and Amareswar Mishra (eds.), *Eternal Gandhi*, New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 1998, p. 230.

as perpetual dialectics. It is the political process between centralization and decentralization of political power along with economic and administrative powers. He made clear cut distinctions and relationships among those who gain the end as truth. His concept of political decentralization is closely related to the economic and administrative decentralizations. It is always supportive to economic and administrative powers sharing by political power.

Parallel Politics

Gandhism is the philosophy of inclusive and never excluded a single issue from the world empowerment process. The philosophy of political decentralization has the important parallel political process; that is limiting the state power and creates the local institutions. In this process it is simultaneously working as the means and ends. The political decentralization as a system of politics, first it is going to limit the state power in one hand. The increasing state power, according to Gandhi is dangerous to civil society. When the power is concentrated in the well organized form either in the hands of the state or private, it will be more violent and coercive. So Gandhi conceived that the control of the state power is the necessary condition to the well being of all. That means centralization of political power may be suitable to few and their luxurious life and empowerment but not for all. It is a form of political power not for the good of all. To avoid the pathetic condition of the people in the centralized system and create better enlightenment in their life, Gandhi suggested the philosophy of political decentralization; it is the political process that demands the devolution of the growing state power against centralization. Through this process the state power will be controlled or limited and shares with its citizens. On the other hand it strives simultaneously to create the people's institutions. It is the institution very close to the people and maintained, established and controlled by the people.

Limiting state power

According to Gandhi, political power is one of the best tools to run the national life, he said that, “The power to control national life through national representatives is called political power. Representatives will become unnecessary if the national life becomes so perfect as to be self-controlled. It will then be a state of enlightened anarchy in which each person will become his own ruler. He will conduct in such a way that his behavior will not hamper the well being of his neighbours. In an ideal state, there will be no political institution and therefore no political power. That is why Thoreau has said in his classic statement that the government is the best which govern by the least.”¹⁴⁷ To him, the increase in state power is the greatest harm to the humankind and it destroys the individuality. The absolute authority of state on the political power compels its people to obey its laws as their duty unquestionably. It is the alternate instrument of coercion and violence and an inevitable concomitant of the state. Characteristically the state is the organization of the social process that sacrifices the individuals for its enhancement through the interference over individuals, domination and exploitation. The Gandhian scholar P. Dayal, said that “Gandhi disfavors the institution of state for, according to him, it is a concentrated and organized form of violence. Rather it is the source of coercion and violence to which it owes its very existence. It could never be weaned from it. It is a soul-less machine not liable to distinguish good from evil. Beside this, as state is based on force and violence, it hinders the development human personality.”¹⁴⁸ There by Gandhi convinced that the centralization of political power in the hands of the state has lesser good than the individuals. Because it suppresses the individual’s liberty and it has more possibilities to emerge as hierarchical structure of the social order, known as the pyramidic structure. Most of the power

¹⁴⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 68, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 265.

¹⁴⁸. Parmeshwari Dayal, *Gandhian Theory of Social Reconstruction*, New Delhi: Atlantic, 2006, p. 234.

holders will be the toppers of the hierarchy others will be reduced according to their level of power holdings and the most lower will be the power looser. For example the ruler, politicians, the state administrators, officials and the public respectively get decrease in power holding. According to P. Dayal “He opposed the vesting of more powers in the state because, in that case, the state will hinder the economic and political freedom of the people. It must serve the people and not master them or repress them.”¹⁴⁹ It is the system of politics that is liable to marginalize the sect of people who pushed away from the main stream of political activity of the state such as participation in decision-making and implementation, political representation and others. According to Gandhi “a man owes only a limited and relative loyalty to the state. This loyalty is conditioned by the justness of the state laws. If the state law is unjust and does not appeal to the conscience of the individual, it becomes his moral duty to oppose it. This may appear to be a threat to the stability of the state, but this is the only safeguard against the absolute power of the state.”¹⁵⁰ That is to say that, the centralization of political power of the state is dangerous to the justice, equality and liberty of the citizen in the state. It is the necessary condition that limits the state power for the sake of individual’s empowerment and non-exploitative and non-dominative state. With the limited power, the state would become the one of the best means to achieve the Gandhian goal of Sarvodaya, greatest good of all. The limiting or controlling the state is only possible by the philosophy of decentralization. It is the process that distributes the power to all, here all will be powerful as well as powerless, that means there will be equality in power access. So, the state automatically becomes the powerless at the same time the powers will be rested on the hands of the people. It is the normative level of Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization that aimed at decentralizing the political system. The drawbacks of the

¹⁴⁹. *ibid*, p. 237.

¹⁵⁰. *ibid*, p. 234.

centralization of the political power of the state and the intension to create peaceful and egalitarian society are the instruments in his philosophy of political decentralization. It starts with the question of how should we decentralize the political system. This is a very important thing because, it is related to the method or mode of action. According to Gandhi the selection of the means is more important than the ends. First of all we have to decide which form of government is suitable to decentralize the political power. Gandhi handled this question in two angles, the first one is the ideal and the second one is practical. There is no segregation between ideal and practical states in Gandhism, these are co-relative and co-operative with each other. The practical state will by bass the ideal state. Some critics criticized that Gandhi was a utopian, it will practically possible when his practical state gets full of its extent. That means the full extent of Gandhian practical state will be his ideal state.

Ideal State

Gandhi's ideal state is known as anarchy, it is the enlightened form of government. According to Gandhi the state is the superfluous and inimical to human progress. Anarchy eradicates hierarchy, it is the political order in which there is no separation between people and ruler and it is self-managed, non-violent and non-hierarchal in its nature. Gandhi said that in the ideal, therefore, there is no political power because there is no state. This means he was not fully opposed to the state, he only opposed evil activities and nature of the state. He wants to build the state without interference in the individuals life and with minimum level of power practice. Gandhi said that "I am not anti-Government but I am anti-untruth, anti-humbug and anti-injustice."¹⁵¹ The influences of Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy acted on Gandhi for the development of the idea of enlightened anarchy. According to these philosophers

¹⁵¹. Pathirana, J. P., *Gandhi and The Concept of Power*, Journal of Gandhian Studies, Vol. 11: October 1983, Battaramulla, Srilanka. cited

the state was to suspect. He said that, this state less society is the pre-condition for the non-violent society. The individuals will be superior to the laws of the state. Gandhi opined that, state is a symbol of violence and force and in an ideal society, there is no room for such an institution which is based on violence, force and compulsion. According to Dhawan, “Gandhi was a philosophical Anarchist because he believed that the (greatest good of all) can be realized only in the classless, stateless democracy.”¹⁵² Gandhi was the foremost champion and practitioner of non-violence. He wanted to establish the non-violent, non-exploitative, casteless and classless society. He struggled to reduce the interference of the state in the individual’s life and tried to create utmost freedom to the individuals.

Practical State

It is the place to choose what type of government is suitable to practice according his ideals, aims and goals. To Gandhi in democracy people are liable to participate in policy making and implementation process and represent its governance body. He wanted to establish the decentralized democracy that means, Gandhian concept of democracy seems to be the practical form in his ideal political order. He did not believe in western mechanism of democracy, which is based on violence and force. But Gandhi’s concept of democracy is inconsistent with violence and force. He believed that there is no possibility to the government which is purely non-violent because of the human imperfection. According to him, it is possible to reduce the violence to the maximum level when the power will be decentralized with in the system of democracy besides the moral practices. Gandhi defined democracy as “Democracy must in essence... mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various

¹⁵². Bhattacharyya Buddhaeva, *Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi*, Culcutta: Calcutta Book House, 1969, p. 479.

sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.”¹⁵³ In his definition on democracy the important thing expressed is the mobilization or transformation of the resource or power which is the essence of the democratic system of government. So the decentralized democracy can be Gandhi’s concept of democracy that is known as the democracy with in democracy. Gandhi’s ideal state of enlightened anarchy aims at preaching the relationship of the state and the people. As a practical idealist he knew that the ideal state of enlightened anarchy is not attainable now. Thereby he suggested the minimum level of political power in the hands of the state is necessary to regulate the socio-economic and political life of the people. Gandhi recurrently stated that “real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused... my notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest.”¹⁵⁴ The decentralized democracy ensures equal opportunity and access. It is one of the most important goals of Gandhi’s ideal state. That’s why he said that “True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.”¹⁵⁵ The goals of greatest good of all, egalitarian society, individual participation and liberty are attainable only in decentralized democratic political system.

Decentralized Democracy

Decentralized democracy means within the democratic state the power should be shared equally by all. Gandhi accepted the state as a means to promote the good of the people. The promotion of good is not only for few or maximum, but it is for the greatest good of all the citizens of the state. On the basis of people’s participation and representation, Gandhi suggested the form of

¹⁵³. Gandhi, M. K., *Mahatma Gandhi: Selected Political Writings*, Dennis Dalton (ed.), Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company Inc, 1996, p. 144.

¹⁵⁴. Mohan Rao, U. S., (ed.), *The Message of Mahatma Gandhi*, New Delhi: Publication Division, 1968, p. 83.

¹⁵⁵. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.01.1948, p. 519.

democratic state to practice his ideal plans and goals. S. Bhatnagar rightly pointed out on the objective of the decentralized democracy that, the objective behind democratic decentralization is the establishment of a decentralized and participatory democracy instead of centralized democracy. According to him, the democracy should not be power oriented but it should be oriented on the welfare of the people. At the same time he realized that power is an unavoidable fact in the state's function. Thus he was conscious on the power corruption and the dangers of the absolute power of the state. That's why he suggested decentralized form of democratic state. It is the system of government that is nearest to Gandhi's ideal state of non-violent society. It reduces the gap between the rulers and the ruled. There is a great opportunity to the people to change the ruler, when they are not satisfied with the functions of the ruler. The concept of decentralization gives sufficient power to the people to make alternation. According to Gandhi, the decentralized democracy is not only for the political freedom or self-rule of the people, it can also make the Sarvodaya society: the all round development of all. That means it is for the socio-economic, spiritual and moral empowerment of the people. Shriman Narayan rightly said "It must be clearly understood that Gandhiji does not advocate decentralization only because of its economic and political advantages. To Gandhiji decentralization envisions and upholds the cultural or spiritual ideal of 'simple living and high thinking'. He does not hanker after raising merely the 'standard of living', he wants to raise the standard life."¹⁵⁶ Decentralized democracy is the most crucial political tool in limiting the state's power. According to Gandhi, centralization of political power is danger to democracy. It demolishes the value of democracy. So Gandhi envisioned the philosophy of political decentralization with the application of democracy for people's independence in the greatest possible level, satisfying their needs and promotes the

¹⁵⁶. Shriman Narayan, *Principles of Gandhian Planning*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1960, p. 112.

democratic egalitarian socio-political order which is free from exploitation. Mean time the important thing is: political decentralization not only sufficient for the success of decentralized democracy, the economic decentralization must go along with it. That means in his words self-rule rule is not attainable without self-reliance, so that the economic freedom is one of the most necessary conditions to attain political freedom. Economic freedom means equal opportunity to hold land and making the business without any restriction. Jaganath Pathy said that “To achieve the objective of decentralization, there is the foremost need of a transformation of land relations. It requires organized peasant movements. Restructuring of land alone is inadequate; it must further be followed by cooperative farming which can assure development of productivity and rural industrialization for greater employment. Under such a situation, democratic decentralization can have real meaning and value.”¹⁵⁷ Economic empowerment is the crucial factor that supports the people’s participation in political activities. When political and economic decentralization join together; they reduce the state power and create the people’s institution like the system of Panchayat Raj. It is the system of grassroot level governing body. It is the fundamental unit of decentralized democracy that satisfies the local needs and necessities and ensures the individual freedom. The deep discussion on panchayat raj will be made in the next part of the chapter.

Construction of People’s Institutions

People’s institution can also be considered as the parallel politics of decentralization. It is a fact that the formation of people’s institution, Gandhian vision of panchayat raj system is necessary to maintain and practice the shared political power among the people. First of all I would like to define the meaning of people’s institution; it is the system of politics, which is very nearest to the

¹⁵⁷. Jaganath Pathy, *Panchayati Raj and Decentralization of Political Power*, Social Scientist, Vol. 8, No. 9, April 1980, pp. 36-41.

people and self-managed and self-regulated local organization. The decision-making and implementation are done by the people, so that they will be the authoritative of this institution. It is run through the collective will of all the individuals. The philosophy of political decentralization is a creation of people's institution with parallel politics. It starts with the devolution of the power of government at the lower institutions. It is the necessary condition to perform its duty of the people institutions. Gandhi said that "Decentralization of political power, therefore, constituted a necessary basis for creating a balance among the individual, the intuitions of civil society, and the state."¹⁵⁸ The balance among the individuals, civil society and state is the first and foremost aim of the people's institutions. According to Gandhi, that is possible through the decentralization of political power. Because it assures the equality in power access, people's participation and representation. Panchayat Raj system was the people's institution in Gandhian political insight. That's why he strived to set up the Panchayat Raj system to make new world order.

Panchayat Raj

Panchayat raj system is the experimental level of Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization. It has pivotal role in making decentralized democracy and village swaraj. To him it is the government of the people. Gram Panchayats are rooted in a tradition that goes back many centuries. They are the basic institutional forms of rural India and have been largely responsible in providing stability and continuity to rural life through all vicissitudes—wars, conquests and natural calamities etc. Even the British recognized the important role of village panchayats in expanding their administrative control to the interior rural areas. This is evident from the fact that the Government enacted the United Provinces Village Panchayat Act in 1920

¹⁵⁸. Bharathi, K. S., *Mahatma Gandhi Man of the Millennium*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Company LTD, 2000, p. 299.

to assist in the administration of civil and criminal justice in the rural areas and also to the effective improvement in the sanitation and other common concerns of the villagers. During the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the role of panchayats as the basic institutional forms of rural India, which fit in with his concept of self-sufficient village societies. The government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons, annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. They have the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the extraction of the village revenue. I have not examined here about the relations with the neighboring villages and the centre. I restricted my study to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For governing the law every villager must suffer to death in the defense of his sake and also for his village's honour. Gandhi said that "The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom..... Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work."¹⁵⁹ According to the Gandhian constitution of decentralized democracy, there would be three tier setup. These are village panchayats, municipal panchayats and district panchayats. Village panchayat is the basic and primary political unit of the governing process of the state, whose members are elected by the adult villagers. The municipal and district

¹⁵⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.01.1922, p. 4.

panchayats are organized by the next lower panchayat leaders. They are having only advisory power over them; they cannot control and interfere their decision-making and implementation process. The members of the municipal and district panchayats would make the provincial panchayat, which would elect the president to serve as the head of the provincial government. Thereafter the provincial panchayat president would comprise all national panchayats. The president of the national panchayat will be the head of the national government. This is the Gandhian method of decentralized democratic form of government, in which each and every one will be the ruler of this system of government. It is assumed by Gandhi that the government is the best which governs the least. In his plan of decentralized democracy the people are placed in centre in the governing process. He said that, “when there are one hundred such panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leaders and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred panchayats shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of panchayats electing second grade leaders after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.”¹⁶⁰ Gandhi said that there is no segregation among the groups these are interrelated and cooperated with one another and there is no lower and higher among village, municipal, district and other levels or grades representatives because they do not have any power, the powers are rested in the hands of the people.

¹⁶⁰. Gandhi, M. K., *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, Anthony J. Parel, (ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 192.

According to Gandhi, Independence has to start from below. As a result, every village Panchayats has to be changed as republic by holding complete powers. He opined that “The voice of the people may be said to be God's voice, the voice of the Panchayat. But how can there be the voice of God where the people themselves are the exploiters...? It is the voice of the people is the voice of God, they will be above party. His scales will be ever evenly weighted with truth and non-violence.”¹⁶¹ Consequently all panchayats have to be self-sustained and competent of managing its dealings without belonging to others. It will be skilled and ready to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence and the willingness to help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and charitable play of mutual forces. Such a society is highly cultured in which the people both male and female know what they want and what is more etc. It is the kind of social arrangement which consists of countless villages. There will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. It is based on the Gandhi's concept of oceanic circle structure of the society. It is not possible for the people placed at the top continued by the people at bottom like pyramid nature in it. The social life appears to be just like an oceanic circle, there the individuals will be the centre of the system, they always prepared to loose anything for the welfare of the village, the individuals life become the collective life of the village. There will be less scope to violence and also to the other feelings of superiority and inferiority. There will be ever modest, sharing the majesty and benevolence in the oceanic circle. The people will be the integral units of it. Hence, the conflicts or clashes cannot take place in this circle. At that same time, it strengthens all from inside the circle. It may be criticized that this is all Utopian thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency has an imperishable value, then Gandhi's concept has its own validity for mankind to live. Gandhi

¹⁶¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 29.09.1946, p. 332.

aspired to establish the co-operation of the villagers in order to eradicate the domination and exploitation. The village Panchayats should be organized by the government and grant sufficient powers and authority to function as the self-government unit.

Functions of the Panchayat

Gandhi was not a system builder in the academic sense. So the systematic frame and function of Panchayat is inevitable. He talked about the functions of panchayats and their modality on various occasions. According to him the panchayats must have sufficient power in their hands to manage the affairs. He said that “It is the function of the Panchayat to revive honesty and industry.... It is the function of the panchayats to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they have to settle them. This will ensure speedy justice without any expenditure. You will need neither the police nor the military... Then the Panchayat should see to cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the mild yield..... The Panchayat should also see to an increase in the quantity of foodstuff grown in their village. This is to be accomplished by properly maturing the soil. You have your indigenous games. You should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from your midst. I hope you will eradicate untouchability if there is any trace of it still in you village. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsees and the Christians should all live as brothers and sisters. If you achieve all I have mentioned, you will demonstrate real independence, and people from all over India will come to see your model village and take inspiration from it.”¹⁶² In the above quotation Gandhi gave clear outlook on the functions of the panchayats. They should maintain honesty; here his moral concepts will be helpful to get genuine life and encourage the village industries with small scale production in accordance with the needs of the people. For dispute settlement, the jurisdiction of the village functions like police and military power. To

¹⁶². Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 04.01.1948, p. 500.

Gandhi agriculture empowerment is one of the basic functions of the panchayat system. Intoxication is the dangerous social evil of the society, it will disturb peace and also the life of the villagers so that the eradication of the intoxication and prohibition of the intoxicative things is the necessary function. Untouchability is the immoral practice of India, according to him it leads to disparities among people and it is the biggest hurdle to the co-operation among the villagers. He realized that the removal of untouchability is the necessary condition to the success of the panchayat system of village government. Communal harmony among different religions of the village also ensures the co-operation among various religious people. On occasion of the Belgaum Congress, in his presidential address Gandhi said that, the administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled to settle the disputes without any arbitration the decisions of these panchayats to be the final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. The Municipality of intermediate courts should be avoided. Under the Panchayat raj jurisdiction the settlement of the disputes will be done among the individuals. To him the justice must be available to the villagers without incurring much cost and inconvenience. So justice will be accessible to all the villagers. It is a fact that Gandhi may talk and wrote more about the functions of the panchayats but he did not systemize these things and they are varied from time to time and place to place. So the real Gandhian follower Shriman Narayan with the approval of Gandhi made the following classification on the panchayat functions. They are:

(a) Education

Education is the most important factor that brings new social order. That is why it is constituted in Gandhi's constructive program. The panchayats compel to give the basic or primary education through the medium of productive graft which is united with the cultural and technical education.

For the successful function, it must run the library with good reading hall. As far as Indian social conditions are concerned, the villagers are mostly workers. For the sake of the aged workers it is suggested to run the night schools. It will be the best means to empower the villagers themselves.

(b) Recreation

Amongst the Indian villagers the habit of recreation is very poor because there is no time to think about these things to them. But it is a necessary thing for their wellbeing. So Gandhi suggested to provide the opportunities like gymnasium, playground and their own games and sports. In addition to these, the arrangements of the art and craft exhibition, the collective celebration of common festivals of the village, folklore art forms and other things are the functions of the panchayats.

(c) Security

Each and every panchayat system owe to protect the village against the thieves, dacoits and wild animals. The panchayats should maintain the guardians for the general protection of the village. They must perform the function of the regular practice of satyagraha and self-defense to all the villagers. The training of Satyagraha will be useful to the citizens to protect themselves from the violence and other coercive form of struggles or disputes. So it has important role in keeping the peace in the panchayats.

(d) Agriculture

Agriculture is the most important factor, that brings self-reliance amongst the villagers. Perhaps it is the crucial function of the panchayats to encourage agriculture and its workers. Thereby the panchayats should encourage land holdings and co-operative farming, proper arrangements for irrigation, promote the production for all necessary food grains in the village, organize the joint

efforts of the villagers to get back the waste lands to cultivation, maintain co-operative banks with possible lower interest rates and fix the tax of the agricultural land and collection.

(e) Industries

Panchayat Raj as the system of village government should encourage the small scale production through the cottage industries such as Khadi, co-operative dairy, village tannery for using the hides of dead animals and others. According to Gandhi, the production should be in accordance with the genuine necessary needs otherwise the mass production will lead to economic power concentration, corruption and exploitation. He was very much in favor of the village industries.

(f) Trade and Commerce

The panchayat raj system is responsible to organize the co-operative marketing for agricultural and industrial products. In trade and commerce the consumer's society plays the crucial role to control it. Thereby organizing the co-operative consumer's society is one of the major functions of the panchayats. The panchayats have to control the import and export. It means excess article of trade only allow exporting. At that same time the things which can not be produced in the village only allow to import. It has to maintain the co-operative godowns for storage.

(g) Sanitation and Medical Relief

For the sake the villagers sanitation and good health the panchayats have to take measures. They should properly maintain the drainage system, ensure the healthy drinking water, check the spread of epidemics and preserve the people from the nuisances. They should run the village hospital and maternity home. They should encourage the free treatment to the villagers.

(h) Justice

The Gandhian decentralized democratic system of panchayat raj has wide legal power. It can provide cheap and speedy justice. It is the important function of the panchayats. It is the best arrangement to resolve the conflicts of the villagers. There is no need to spend more money and time in getting judgment through the town or high courts. Gandhi said that, village panchayats should be entrusted with the provision of justice; no separate judicial panchayats are necessary. There is no need to go out of his village for the villagers and they can save their hard-earned money and time instead of spending in towns of litigation. There is no scope for exploitation by lawyers and false witness. In case of the complicated cases, sub-judge from the taluka or district can handle the village cases in order to reconcile and assist the panchayat. The sub-judge should also act as guide, friend and philosopher to the ignorant villagers by acquainting them with the laws of the state. Such a judicial system would not only be simple, punctual and cheap but also just because the details of civil and criminal cases will be, more or less, open secrets in the village and there should be hardly any scope for fraud and legal juggleries.

(i) Finance and Taxation

According to Gandhi the village should be self-sufficient. The self-sufficient village can expect any financial resource from outside the village. The financial resources must be necessary for proper functioning of the panchayats. So the panchayats have the rights to collect the taxes from its citizens. It is the basic requirement for proper functioning of the panchayat functions. Meantime the accounts should be maintained properly in respect of the income and expenditures. In addition to these there are some important functions of village Panchayat. They are:

1. All matured villagers both male and female have the right of speaking in the village administration in order to maintain truly participatory democracy, as well as the community.
2. The village panchayats should take the decisions based upon consensus and they should avoid divisive approach in decision making because it gives scope to the favoritism based on party politics, religion, caste, creed, class or culture.
3. The administration of panchayats should follow the philosophy of 'Antodaya' or unto the last, which states that, equal consideration to the least. So equitable distribution of scarce resources and other rights should be ensured.
4. It is very common in the collective life of village for raising the conflicts, but they should be settled within the four boarders of certain village. Taking the cases out of the village lead to the curse, litigations and destroys the rural economy.
5. The protection of the people specifically disabled, helpless and the natives of the village and their resources should be protected. In fact it is one of the functions of the Panchayats.

Nature of Panchayat Raj or Decentralized Political System

Panchayat Raj is a government in Gandhian view. It is the blueprint of the decentralized democracy. It has various levels such as village panchayat, intermediate panchayat and district panchayat. According to Gandhi, in this system of government the political power should be decentralized to the extent of possible levels along with economic power. As a government at the lower level, it must have some characters of its own. Its nature and characters should express the following questions like what are the factors that really make a government of panchayat? What

are the essential characters and features of the decentralized government? The first one is self-rule. It is very much liable to the devolution of political power to all equally. In this system each individual possesses the power to decide his representatives of that government. Everyone should rule over themselves and never by others in the same manner every village should be self-ruled Gram Swaraj was self-ruled by the villagers themselves. Village is the lowest unit in a decentralized system. He called it as village republic; according to which each village would be self-sufficient and self-contained republic. He comprehended that, the Hind Swaraj would be a confederation of village republics. In seven lakh villages the form of government would be direct and participatory, and at the federal and confederation levels it would be representative and parliamentary along with the representatives elected on the basis of adults franchise. To regulate its functions and other activities some kind of powers are necessary. They are:

- i) Taxing power
- ii) Police power and
- iii) The power of the eminent domain.

Through the taxation of power, it would mean that the authority termed as government should have the right to increase the revenue in the course of necessary extraction to defray the operating expense of its compulsory functions. Through the police power the government has the right to regulate the behavior pattern of the people living within the governmental jurisdiction in such a manner that the individual voluntarily sub-judge his interests for the sake of community interest since the 'Good of individual is contained in the good of all'. The power of the renowned area vests the authority termed as government, to resort to the foregoing of the achievement of land, water, sub soil rights, ambient air, mines and mineral deposits etc. as well as the power to

escheat. It is on these touchstones one has to decide whether an authority is really clad with governmental power or not.

The Panchayat Raj system as the decentralized system of government has the following unique characters. They are the horizontal, ever inclusive, spiritual and moral in their natures. It may be said that the system which is leveled in all the aspects of socio-economic and political life of the country or the concerned village. There won't be any kind of disparities. The professions of the people will be treated with equal status and dignity. Each of the individual or groups or sects are scattered in the society, thereby it is not possible to think and teach about the superiority and inferiority among them. It is the part and parcel of the Gandhi's philosophy of Sarvodaya. So it is applied for all aspects of social as well as personal life. No one can exclude from the process of this power sharing, either rich or poor, higher caste or lower caste, male or female etc. It is considered as the process to incorporate the people in a common plat-form of the common wealth of the society. The spirituality of the Gandhian philosophy brings the moral nature to the concept of political decentralization. It aims at sharing the power for the sake of the social welfare because the individuals are the constituents of the society. So the welfare of the society inherently related to individuals welfare. It can be concluded that the Panchayat Raj system of government is the welfare oriented settlement for all this issues.

Analysis

Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization is not only for India, it can be applied for the common good of the world. Through political decentralization, Gandhi visualized nationalism towards internationalism based on village settlement. Here village settlement does not mean the village isolation; it means mutually co-operative and inter-dependent settlement. In this context

the critics of Gandhi raised many questions on politically decentralized government and also on the structure of village government (Panchayat Raj). There must be a centralized state for the development and needs of the country. This means that the social, economic and political developments necessarily depend upon the centralized nation. According to Gandhi, the natural development of the nation only possible in the decentralized political system, this development will be for all and by all. Because, his philosophy of political decentralization provides greater possibility to all in participating the developmental process of the nation and share the fruits to all. In a centralized system there may be the development, but the fruits will be enjoyed by the few of the dominants. That is to say “The centralized institutions are not a necessary condition for improving the lot of the people. The non-violent character of a society is guaranteed only by decentralized institutions and not by centralization of political power. Decentralized institutions become an end in themselves because they guarantee non-violent participation as well as institutions for self-improvement.”¹⁶³ Specifically Gandhian concept of political decentralization is fully moral based; it is non-violent as its basic tenet. There by the force or coercion cannot be taken place in its institutions of the Panchayat Raj. His political decentralization works to create local institutions in the lower level. The individual as well as the national development is more important in it. As the nation is nothing but the collectivity of the individuals in certain manner, so the individual development implies the national development but here the individual must mean all the individuals of the nation. Gandhian concept of decentralization ensures equality in power sharing thereby it will ensure the equal development of all.

The national development does not mean only the political empowerment, it also implies economic and social developments. According to Gandhi, political decentralization must go hand in hand with economic decentralization. It is the institution that ensures the self-sufficient

¹⁶³. Bharathi, K. S., Op. cit, p. 298.

village republics, which produce their own vital wants of the food, clothing and shelter based on the needs independently. These village institutions will be inter-dependent, mutually co-operative with their neighbors for the needs. Shriman Narayan says that 'in fact the idea of maximum self-sufficiency is the outcome of Gandhiji's doctrine of swadeshi which has been defined by him as that spirit in us which restricts the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Gandhiji advocated such swadeshi spirit mainly from the view point of humanism; he preferred to serve the country through the service of his neighbors by patronizing their goods and establishing the socio-economic ties for the mutual benefits'. Gandhian concept of economy ensures the decentralization of the material power equally among all. According to Gandhi in order to maintain the stability at the village level self-reliance is the essential condition. Thereby he suggested the following economic principles of Khadi, Village industries, Trusteeship and so on. Khadi preached by Gandhi is for the self-sustenance of the individual as well as the village. He said that "Charkha is the symbol of the nation's prosperity and therefore freedom. It is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace. It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of goodwill and self-help. It will not need the production of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their homes as today they cook their food in their homes. I may deserve the curse of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessing for suggesting a revival of the Charkha. I take my all on it. For revolution of the wheel spins peace, goodwill and love. And with all that, inasmuch as the loss of it brought about India's slavery, its voluntary revival with all its implications must mean India's freedom."¹⁶⁴ Khadi is the symbol of the home made production the vital need, the individuals themselves can reduce trade on vital

¹⁶⁴. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 08.12.1921.

commodities. It will promote self-sustenance of the individuals, village and nation. The village industries are based on the hypothesis of 'production by the mass instead of mass production by few'. This hypothesis ensures the employment opportunity to all that leads to poverty reduction and eradicates unemployment and underemployment. The village industries have full scope to achieve economic decentralization in the non-violent manner. Gandhi's concept of decentralized economy is supportive to decentralized industries which consist of handicrafts, cottage industries and village industries. When people involve in production to fulfill their own needs, they put more concentration and care in its quality thereby the efficiency of production will be increased. There production and distribution should equally decentralized. So there is no scope to centralize the economic power. The decentralized industries are consistent with local needs and necessities, they reduce unnecessary expenditure of the money power by the transporting the commodities from one place to another. The national growth should be the growth of all citizens. Actual meaning of the national development according to Gandhi is only the development of all instead of our present governments showing eight and nine percent of growths while crore's of people are lying under poverty and hunger. The growth rates rested on hundreds of people, they occupy place in record of the world richest people. But in the contemporary period, crore's of the poor do not have the basic necessities. Gandhi did not like this development. He aspired for the decentralized development and the development must be equal to all. Thereby he suggested the theory of trusteeship to share the equal economic value in the society. This economic theory aims at eradicating the wider gap between the have's and have not's. It is a social process that transfers the private property towards the community ownership, where no one can exploit others the labour and peasants are the co-partners with capitalists and landlords. According to this concept the owners having excess money are expected to spend some portion for the sake of the

genuine community development so that the economic power automatically transfers from the have's to have not's. Gandhian method of the national development will be ever inclusive with socio-economic, moral and political developments.

Some of the Gandhian critics raised the question on the national security and our protection from the foreign aggression. They said that “the international events of the post world War, where militarism is a necessary ingredient to national political survival which is mainly a function of centralized administrative political system.”¹⁶⁵ Their views revealed that the democratic decentralization and the small local governments will reduce the national strength thereby we cannot protect the country from foreign aggression and other attacks. Here the important fact is, Gandhi was basically an internationalist, we cannot limit him in any decline on the basis of religion, caste and nationality. He seeks the common wealth of the world, he was the seeker of *Sarvodaya* and he aspired for the non-violent new world order. Individual freedom is important to Gandhi. He said that “The spirit of political and international liberty is universal and, it may even be said, instinctive.... The attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each ... there is no such thing as slow freedom. Till we are fully free we are all slaves... I want freedom for the full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to... no action which is not voluntary can be called moral. So long as we act like machines there can be no question of morality... morality... freedom is like birth. Till we are fully free, we are slaves... no charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority.... True nonviolence should mean a complete freedom from ill-will and anger and hate and an overflowing love for all.... Complete independence does not

¹⁶⁵. Sharma, M. L., *Gandhi and Democratic Decentralization in India*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication, 1987, p. 63.

mean arrogant isolation or a superior disdain for all help... if it is man's (sic) privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be inter-dependent... Any action that is dictated by fear or by coercion of any kind ceases to be moral... freedom of the individual is at the root of all progress."¹⁶⁶ Gandhi favored to democratic decentralization and small village government in order to ensure the freedom and autonomy of the village which is attained through the means of non-violence. The village governments are not isolated from one another. In the common causes and the national affairs, they should be mutually co-operative and inter-dependent. For national security and strength, the village government should give its support and always be the part of the country. Finally Gandhi's concept of internationalism and stateless society are the final attainments. The national welfare implies the welfare of the village and individual. This is the Gandhian approach towards the internationalism through nationalism. This kind of politically decentralized village government is very much useful to strengthen the nation towards the international peace. The centralized political system doesn't strengthen the national security and peaceful life because peace and power centralization is inconsistent with each other. It is a fact that by nature power centralization always rises to competition, conflicts and quarrels.

Due to the misunderstanding of Gandhian ideas on political decentralization; there are doubts on its practical possibility. It doubts that present world is changing with the advancement of the science and technology and it is moving towards capturing the other world. It seems to be complex that in these circumstances is it possible to simplify the small government and power decentralization? The purpose of the scientific and technological advancement is only to simplify our life, instead it becomes more complex and it is mainly due to the misuse of the advancement. Gandhi therefore preferred to concentrate his energies on building up the courage and organized strength of the victims in the firm belief that when once they realize the hidden mechanism of

¹⁶⁶. <http://www.carolmoore.net/articles/gandhi-quotes.html>

their oppression and gained a sense of power, it would not last even a day. He also thought that “much of the violence and oppression of the modern age sprang from the dominant ‘materialistic’ view of man and could only be ended by creating a civilization based on the spiritual conception of man.”¹⁶⁷ That’s why Gandhi suggested the moral teachings of self-control, non-possession and the utilization of the things should be based on our needs instead of greed. With these moral endorses political decentralization is very much suitable to practice in our present day situation. Here simplicity within complexity is possible when the political powers are decentralized because it is very much supportive to the other factors of decentralization such as economic, social, the power of artificial intelligence, science and technology. In a decentralized system of government all the above mentioned aspects will be distributed equally to all. So there can be no village isolated from the other, all are instinctively unite themselves in a certain way. Gandhi was not totally against scientific and technological development and their utilization. He desired that man should have control over these advancements. He also said that we can use all the modern technological advancements in its possible extent, if it satisfies certain principles such as the production in the non-violent manner, non-exploitation, non-alienation and other evil effects. Gandhi thought that “When our villages are fully developed, there will be no dearth in them of men with high degree of skill and artistic talent. There will be village poets, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short there will be nothing in life worth having, which will not be had in villages.”¹⁶⁸ The Gandhian appraisal on the drawbacks of the scientific advancements is mainly on the centralized utilization and in its immoral approaches. Through Gandhian way, we can share the technological power in

¹⁶⁷. Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi’s Political Philosophy A Critical Examination*, Hong Kong: Macmillan Press, 1989, p. 6.

¹⁶⁸. Karalay, G. N., *Integrated Approach to Rural Development: Policies, Programmes and Strategies*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2005, p. 76.

the village level and can have control over that. The most important thing is: human beings should be the masters of the technology and science and they should not be the slaves of these things.

Misuse of the power

Our past experiences provide lot of evidences for misusing the power of the village institutions by the head of the village. The remarkable change took place during the British rule in India. During their regime, the village head has the power to collect the land revenue from the peasants but they used to pay part of it to the government and keep the remaining for their own purposes. So they gradually became the richer and landlords (Zamindars). These land lords are supposed to be the upper class or caste there by the social evil of the caste dispute, nepotism and favoritism can be witnessed within the village institution. This condition ultimately leads to social divisions as haves and have not's and also leads to caste clashes within the village institution. The divisions, domination and exploitation are the social factors, these all are not new things, they are existing since long back in human history around the world. The misuse of power in the case of nepotism and favoritism with the community welfare and other things are fully prohibited in Gandhian method of politically decentralized village institutions. The concepts of economic decentralization, trusteeship, non-possession and non-stealing are the instruments of moral enlightenment. According to Gandhi political decentralization and economic decentralization are the two sides of the same coin; they must join together in the process of non-exploited egalitarian society. In order to attain economic decentralization in the non-violent manner he suggested the principle of trusteeship. It suggests that the property of excess over the needs of the person should be spent for the social welfare not for their own luxuries life. So the property holding in this structure is a meaningless there by we can gradually reduce the economic divides in the

society because the concept of trusteeship has the full scope for economic distribution in the society.

The caste favoritism has been practicing in the village institutions in India, this leads to the unstable participation of the lower caste people. It is one of the unavoidable questions while talking about political decentralization; can we combine decentralization and participatory government? Participatory government means not only few can participate in the governing process. To Gandhi it is the participation of all in the region of the government. According to him people's participation is a must in proposing political decentralization. He believed that it is possible to attain his aim of the classless or the egalitarian society through it. To him decentralization is the one of the best means to promote the people's participation in governmental affairs. The power transformation without accountable participation is useless, at the same time the promotion of people's participation without adequate power is empty. There by we can conclude that the concept of political decentralization and participation are very relevant and co-operative to each other. Gandhi's concept of democratic decentralization especially the village government (Panchayat raj) brings adequate power to the people by their participation. That's why it is called as the democracy within democracy. But there are some hurdles for its success in India. As I have already said that, India is the multifaceted country, it's most crucial and dangerous complexity is rested in the Indian caste system. It is the biggest obstacle against his aim of classless and decentralized society.

Classless society is the society where there is no scope for the any kind of disparities and variations. In the phenomenal world there are lot of natural as well as artificial variations and disparities. The artificial distinction of the Indian caste system is the biggest hurdle to the classless society. Initially Karl Marx visualized such a kind of classless society in a systematic

manner. Classless society is the cornerstone to attain the egalitarian society thereby he suggested the violent means to attain that. The goal of Mahatma Gandhi has been similar with Marx, he wanted to establish the same egalitarian and classless society. But Gandhi thought that violent means cannot bring the permanent solution to any problem. So he differed from Marx and suggested non-violence as the means to bring the solution. Gandhi formulated the theory of Satyagraha based on non-violence and applied to eradicate all the socio-economic and political evils. In India there are many more obstacles to attain the classless society. They are untouchability, Hindu caste system, sex, religion and the problem of haves and have nots. He strived for the removal of untouchability. It is the foremost step to attain his goal. To him it is the social evil, inhuman attitude, he said that “The attack on untouchability is thus an attack upon this ‘high and low’ ness. The moment untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified..... It will resolve itself into true Varnadharma, the four division of society, each complementary of the other, and none inferior or superior to any other, each as necessary for the whole body of Hinduism as any other.”¹⁶⁹ This quotation is exploring Gandhi’s mind on untouchability and Varna Dharma. He wanted to eradicate untouchability and also purify the Varna dharma. Gandhi thought that “people to take Varnadharma in its true spirit of its four fold divisions of universal occupation-importing knowledge, defending the defenceless, carrying on agricultural and commerce and performing service through the labour.”¹⁷⁰ He opposed the unequal status in the name of caste, for him caste, implies difference in rank is a wickedness. In addition to this he had the opinion that “Arrogation of a superior status by any of the Varna over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of varna to warrant a belief in

¹⁶⁹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 11.02.1933. p. 51.

¹⁷⁰. Prabhu, R. K. and Rao, U. R., (eds.), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956, p. 109.

untouchability.”¹⁷¹ According to him Varna Dharma would thus help to create a non-violent society in which one and all would work for the promotion of social good by making his living by following that ancestral calling. To Gandhi, there should not be any restriction to inter-marriage and inter-dining in Varna Dharma and also it provides the option to different Varnas. When Gandhi was making Harijan tour, “Gandhi was attacking an age-old tyranny and long-established vested interests which did not stick at anything to preserve themselves. The orthodox Hindus accused him of a dangerous heresy: they organized black-flag demonstration: they heckled him and tried to disrupt his meetings. On 25th June 1934, while he was on his way to the municipal hall in Poona, a bomb was thrown at his party: seven persons were injured, though Gandhi was unhurt. He expressed his deep pity for martyrdom: he said, but if it come in my way in the prosecution of, what I consider to be, the supreme duty in defence of the faith I hold in common with millions of Hindus, I shall have well earned it.”¹⁷² According to Gandhi untouchability is cruel and also an inhuman institution. It always violates the dignity of the marginalized people’s lives and forced them to do the works of unclean and degrading. In India, they were restricted from temples and the public institutions like schools and hostels etc. They will remain as Hindus and worship Hindu gods. The socio-economic and political opportunities were exploited by higher caste Hindus. Gandhi considered untouchability as the social evil and also the biggest hurdle of the national unity and empowerment. He realized that the attainment of ‘Poorna Swaraj’ is not possible without the removal of untouchability. To him Sawraj means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. The removal of untouchability was the necessary condition to self-rule and self-reliance. As the true Vedantin, he loves Hinduism dearer than life and opined that the taint of untouchability as an intolerable burden. He said that, “Hinduism will

¹⁷¹. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.07.1936.

¹⁷². Nanda, B. R., *Gandhi and His Critics*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 24-25.

certainly never deserve the freedom nor get it if they allow their noble religion to be disgraced by the retention of the taint of untouchability.”¹⁷³ According to Gandhi, “The idea of superiority and inferiority is repugnant to the most elementary principles of morality. A Brahmana who considers himself superior to any single creature of god ceases to be Brahmana. If we are the children of the same God, how can there be any rank among us? What will happen to the body, if these members begin to quarrel about rank? The verses in the Smritis about Sutras deserve to be summarily rejected as being contrary to the spirit of humanity.”¹⁷⁴ To eradicate untouchability, he suggested inter-marriage, inter-dining and he started the HarijanSevakSangh in the year 1932 based on the following principles:

1. To promote socio, economic and cultural welfare of the underprivileged and weaker sections including Harijans, Adivasis, Dalits and help them to live a dignified life.
2. To secure human development irrespective of caste, creed, sex and religion.
3. To bring growth and development of the children basing on holistic approach.
4. To disseminate popular education in lieu of elitist education of the present day, so as to ensure education for all.
5. To promote vocational education and training leading to income generation.

Many Harijan Sevak Sanghs were started in most of the parts of India to develop an integrated health care system and sanitation on community based sustainable development programmes. The strategies were formulated on the basis of specific aims and objectives. The central strategy is to concentrate on the child welfare and development with the belief that

¹⁷³. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 06.10.1921.

¹⁷⁴. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 28.09.1934.

childhood is the segment of life when mind, body and personalities are formed and even the slightest deprivation during this period can lead to life-long impairment that result in the fundamental distortion in human development. Gandhiji founded the Harijan Sevasangh and laid emphasis on basic education, sanitation and Gram Swaraj. It is the critical situation to find Gandhi's true thought on these problems. These are co-operatively disturbing the egalitarian society. Untouchability is the product of Varna Dharma and the success of political decentralization is not possible because the Indian four fold caste system and untouchability are persisting in India. The caste system is always making the big divide in society with domination and exploitation. Dr. Ambedkar said that "Varnadharma has greatly damaged Hindu society by degenerating itself in casteism and untouchability."¹⁷⁵ Gandhi accepted varnadharma in accordance with socio-economic, political condition of his time. During that period the Indian political sphere was fully dominated and controlled by the upper caste people. For the sake of the Indian freedom movement, he favored Varna Dharma, meanwhile he opposed the depression, domination and other effects of caste system. He organized lot of satyagraha movements towards the eradication of the untouchability. But in practice our present day society provides numerous evidences for disturbance by the caste system in the process of political decentralization. Though, Gandhi perfectly conceived of a stateless and classless society which was consistent with decentralized economy and polity.

In this context, I wish to quote the recent issue happened in Tamilnadu and other parts of India. With respect to the caste oppression on June 30th 1997, the scheduled caste candidate stood for the election to the village panchayat of the Melavalavu in Tamilnadu, which is reserved constituency. There by the higher caste people of the village brutally murdered six persons,

¹⁷⁵. Nirmala Singh, *Non-Violence and Satyagraha in Gandhian Philosophy*, New Delhi: Janki Prakashan, 1997, p. 70.

including the president and the vice president of the panchayat. This incident was happened because of the caste domination. The upper caste people of the village could not accept the advancement of the lower caste people. They threatened the lower caste people to reprisal of their nomination. They burnt the houses of the Dalits, injured them and murdered for contesting in the election of the panchayat. Regarding the harassments they are facing, N. Thalayan of the Dalit Panchayat presidents Federation, said that, “In many villages, dalit presidents are still not allow to sit on chairs during panchayat meetings. The harassment meted out to women is more. I’ve known of women dalit president who were driven out of the village. They now reside in another village and visit their own village for purpose of administration.”¹⁷⁶ These are the few evidences out of the numerous incidents. It is a fact that from the phenomenological point of view, Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization and its practical form of democratic decentralization (Panchayat raj system) has some difficulties with the Indian caste system in its nature of the oppression and depression, domination and exploitation. So it is necessary to eradicate the caste system in India and all the form of oppressive and depressive, dominative and exploitative hierarchical society aimed for the success of political decentralization. It is biggest contradiction in Gandhian philosophy simultaneously accepting the varnadharma and moving towards the removal of untouchability and decentralizes the political power. It is a fact that Gandhi’s attitude on Indian caste system has progressively become settled with situation of the time and needs. It is realized in his deep study. In December 1920, he wrote, “I consider the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. The innumerable sub-castes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion, the better.”¹⁷⁷ Gandhi’s mind on the Indian caste system and its practical experiences with the decentralized local

¹⁷⁶. <http://scstemployees.blogspot.com/2010/10/dalit-panchayat-presidents-in-state.html>

¹⁷⁷. Gandhi, M. K., *Young India*, 08.12-.1920, p. 3.

government through the deep analysis revealed that they are in contradiction with each other. So Gandhian Philosophy has to reconstruct with the reduction of caste system in his ideology.

Nature of Decentralized Political System

Political decentralization is the system of governance that is practiced through the Panchayat raj system. In India it is called as democratic decentralization. According to Gandhi, it is the system consistent with the people's participation and their representation in decision making and also implementation process of the government. It has many characters and features. These are the Horizontal structure of the society, all inclusive and spiritual and moral. In his words "if we would see our dream of Panchayat Raj, i.e., true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbor any distinction between community, caste and out-caste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal on par with the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn and honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe Swadeshi as the rule of life and man would regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life..."¹⁷⁸ According to Gandhi decentralized political system is an oceanic circle; it is ever enlarging and never climbing. In his scheme of decentralized polity, the balanced life on power utilization will be ensured. There will

¹⁷⁸. Gandhi, M. K., *Harijan*, 18.01.1948, P. 517.

be no scope for apex sustained by the bottom. The individual will be the centre of this oceanic circle. There are two types of decentralized structures: one is vertical and another one is horizontal. In vertical decentralization, the power devolution will be in the ascending order and the distribution of power will be from the top to bottom. Here, most of the important decisions will be taken by the toppers. It is the hierarchal structure, the toppers will have more power than the lower group. But in the horizontal decentralization the power distribution will be without limitations, it will flow from outside the line of the authority. It has the full scope in the participation of lower groups in decision making and implementation process of the government. The American third president Thomas Jefferson, he said that “It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man’s farm by himself; by placing under everyone what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best.”¹⁷⁹ In vertical type of decentralization there will be one or two or many tires, there is a possibility to higher tires handling more power than the lower groups that lead to the hierarchical power structure, but in Gandhian political decentralization the power will be distributed among the people in the equal manner, it is people centered and more horizontal. The powers of the decision making and implementation will be scattered among the individuals in it. According to Gandhi the village government was a society which was fundamentally sound in a learned way, the seats of power being filled by scholars not military commanders. The central government should deal upon the automatic performance of the village communities with least intrusion. In Gandhian model, actual power is rested in the hands of individuals thereby he said if we wish to attain self-rule in gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards, by constructive effort, is the only method. The Horizontal type of

¹⁷⁹. Thomas Fleming, Op. cit.

political decentralization has the crucial role in self-governing process of the people with the minimization of the central interference in their political as well as the social life.

Decision Making Authority

With regard to the decision making in decentralization who will decide? If the central government decides all questions in respect of governance and public welfare of the state, it will be more centralized in its level on the other hand if the local government decides all the questions on the same respect, there will be more decentralized society. In Gandhian analysis, the decision making power should be decentralized and must be in the hands of the people, because they only know better than others about their needs and the conditions. In a multifaceted country like India, the people are varied in many ways such as caste, religion, ethnicity, language, and culture. So the central government cannot decide or cannot mind all the diversified needs while deciding the policies of the country. So it is the necessary condition to undertake the local governments and also individual's participation to frame the better policy and its implementation. Here the local government will be acted as the instrument of the individuals to fulfill their necessary needs and empower themselves. That is to say, "The greater the power of the Panchayats, the better for the people."¹⁸⁰ At the same time the competitive situation of the modern world compels to undertake the centralized system of government as necessary like foreign relations, education policy and health care systems etc. To resolve the practical implication of political decentralization; the application of Gandhian principles is the necessary condition because of his wider vision of seeking towards the internationalism through nationalism. He stressed on mutual co-operation among the village governments. In the debate between individual autonomy and national sovereignty: to Gandhi each of these includes the other, the national sovereignty must be based on the individual autonomy through the village

¹⁸⁰. Pradhan, B., *The Socialist Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, Delhi: G.D.K. Publications, 1980, p. 188.

autonomy towards the internationalism. This internationalism is his ultimate aim of the welfare of all. In the Sarvodaya society based on power decentralization in the non-violent manner the individuals are always ready to perish for the sake of village and the nation. So decision making power in the hands of the people rather than the central government is the most important thing in Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization to attain his ultimate aim of the egalitarian society.

Realistic Utopia

It is a long standing debate that Gandhi's philosophy of political decentralization is an utopian or realistic among the scholars, critics, thinkers and writers. They have been arguing to highlight the practical possibilities of this philosophy. In Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization, the problem is rested on the grounds of the equal power sharing without any distinction and in a non-violent means. The critics criticize that; how is it possible to decentralize the political power? Because the world is diversified in many ways apart from the unity as human beings, the present day situation is not same as the past, now the world is moving towards the centralized form of the globalization. And they argue that it is not possible without adequate violent force because the history of the revolution of the world reveals the same. But for Gandhi it was not a mere utopian, it is realistic. Gandhi showed the path of the revolution and destination and we have the responsibility to follow the path towards attaining the destination. In the present context his path and destination is considered as impracticable that means utopia. But it is a realistic utopia, it is the prospective programme of action for the social revolution and for the better future. According to the American political philosopher John Rawls the realistic utopia means, it is the phenomenon of the critical intension to break the existing conditions and bring the better future. His notion of realistic utopia has the specific conditions. They are:

1. Reasonable: pluralism and its limitations.
2. Liberal conception of justice that is realistic (taking people as they are; well-ordered).
3. Workable, applicable as principles and policies. Eg; primary social virtues like liberty, opportunities, rights, income, wealth, health, vigor, intelligence and imagination.
4. Political ideas, principles and concepts that specify a reasonable just society.
5. Justice satisfies the criterion of reciprocity (reasonable for others to accept as free and equal citizens.)
6. Political category is having all essential elements of a conception of justice e.g., free citizen is determined by a liberal political conception.
7. Because of reasonable pluralism, political and social institutions effectively lead its citizens to acquire the appropriate sense of justice, apply them and produce stability.
8. Does not require religious unity (rather unity within diversity).
9. Toleration (reasonable pluralism) must follow.

Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization and its practical form of Panchayat raj is very much applicable to the Rawls notion of the realistic utopia. Gandhi's political decentralization was not just a dream to be enjoyed, but a vision to be pursued and it is the vision of the perfect political system. In the realistic utopian political society, equality will be prevailed among all, it will be self-ruled and self-sustained, duties and rights are equally shared by all, it will provide place to the moral and spiritual developments and finally leading to the egalitarian society. The social life around the world has diversities and divides specifically; country like India is very much pluralistic in its nature with many bases like religion, caste, class, language, ethnicity, gender, geographical and so on. On Gandhian notion of political decentralization, there

is no scope for such a social gulf and human beings are the equal members of the worldly life and also equal citizens of the respective country. It reveals that there is a power sharing process that ensures the equal approach in decision-making and implementation by the people. So it is very much reasonable in the pluralistic society. The limitations of the pluralistic society are conflicts, clashes and wars above all the instability of the institution. While all of the members of the society or institution have equal power, rights and duties, there is no scope for raising conflicts, clashes and there must be stability ensured. Gandhi called it as the democratic decentralization. He suggested it as the alternative to the centralized political system. According to Gandhi, Panchayat Raj system is not only a political unit, it is a well disciplined socio-economic system with moral enrichment. Each and every one can raise their voice against injustice in it. Because they have adequate power and rights and there is no hierarchy in power access. So the individuals will be liberal in gaining easiest and quickest justice in the Panchayat Raj system. Its workability of the economic principle will ensure its core principles of trusteeship, small scale and village industries, because these concepts assure economic decentralization. It is supportive to the natural resource utilization in the decentralized manner by all people. There by their self-reliance will be found in the democratic decentralization. The central idea or the principle or the concept of political decentralization of Gandhi is non-dominative, non-exploitative, non-violent egalitarian society. It's reasonability and possibility is revealed in the present day society. Gandhian principles are still followed. Because political decentralization is not an isolated principle to Gandhi, it is the byproduct of his other principles of socio-economic and moral. Political ideas cannot be developed suddenly in a just society, it prevails along with social, economical and moral factors. It is necessary condition to uphold the other principles of Gandhi to achieve the just society. In democratic decentralization, the

democratization of society and culture are also the important milestones. In a decentralized society, religion does not have any important role because it cannot influence and affect the social life in any manner. In normative and implementation level it does not have any place while all religious people treated as the same constituent parts of the country. So the religions should not interfere. They must show toleration among the individuals and neighbours. There by we can say Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization is the realistic utopia and it is the picture of the perfect society that can be realized through his principles. Its practical steps moving towards controlling the power of central governments, establishment of the local governments, co-operation among these local governments, exercise the constant moral pressure on society to change the condition of the country and also the individual's willingness towards the peaceful society. Thomas Vettickal rightly pointed out about Gandhi's parallel nature of political decentralization; he said that "Gandhi had a concrete agenda for implementing decentralization of power. On a political level, it means taking power from the centre and bringing it to the village"¹⁸¹ Gandhi said that "would there be state power in an ideal society or world such a society be stateless? I think the question is futile. If we continue to work towards the building of such a society, to some extent it is bound to be realized and to that extent people will benefit by it. Euclid has defined a straight line as having no breadth, but no one has yet succeeded in drawing such a line and no one ever will. Still we can progress in geometry only by postulating such a line. This is true of every ideal."¹⁸² John Rawls said that "my idea of a realistic utopia doesn't settle for a compromise between power and political right and justice, but sets limits to the reasonable exercise of power."¹⁸³ Gandhi has similar ideas like Rawls in

¹⁸¹. Thomas Vettickal, *Gandhian Sarvodaya: Realizing A Realistic Utopia*, New Delhi: National Gandhi Museum, 2002, p.9.

¹⁸². Gandhi, M. K., *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 85, Op. cit, 1982, p. 267.

¹⁸³. John Rawls, *Law of Peoples; with, The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*, Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 6.

attaining the decentralized society; he suggested constraining the power in the hands of few with the moral fortification. That's why Gandhi laid more emphasis on the local government during the freedom struggle. He said that "it is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention, if our independence is to reflect people's voice. The greater the power of panchayats the better for the people."¹⁸⁴ Under his influence the Panchayat raj system got the place in Indian constitution in the article of 40 under the title of "Directive Principle of State Policy" which says that 'the state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self government'. In this context Gandhi's co politician Jawaharlal Nehru has taken the first step in this direction. He introduced the Community Development Programme and National Extension Service. But these brought very poor results, thereby he framed the committee headed by the BalwantRai Mehta in 1957 study and also for the analysis of these two programmes. Nehru pointed out "I have no doubt in my mind that the experiment of democratic decentralization is a revolutionary change in India. It has changed, it is changing and it will change the whole texture of our society, of our thinking and of our actions. It is an exciting thing to sit among the panchas and sarpanchas who have been charged with new responsibilities, listen to their questions and criticism. You find a mind grappling with new problems, a mind which has never before given thought to any problem. It is the biggest revolution one can imagine, a peaceful revolution though. One cannot but be surprised at the new receptiveness which is coming to the Indian farmer. It is the basic change which is important because out of it comes a changeover to better techniques of food production and really means changing rural society."¹⁸⁵ In 1958 BalwantRai Mehta committee

¹⁸⁴. Biju, M. R., *Dynamics of New Panchayati Raj System Reflections and Retrospections*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1998, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵. JawaharLal Nehru, *Speech in the Rajya Sabha on Draft Third Plan*, Quoted in Kurukshetra, October 02, 1960, p.6.

submitted their report and suggested the recommendations. It reports that, local government should be three tier structure; the district, intermediate and village levels and there should be the close relation among these. It says that 'the constitution of Panchayat should be purely an elective basis with the provision for co-option of two women members and one from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. No other special groups need to be given special representation. The power transformation should come from the other levels to the village Panchayats. Financial and other resources must be transferred adequately and the developmental and welfare plans must be routed through the local government only. The Panchayats can fix various taxes. It may take the important steps towards realizing the Gandhian ideal of political decentralization. Its report and recommendations are based on Gandhi's suggestions. Another important event was establishment of Panchayat Raj system basing on the report of Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977 to study the possible ways for the betterment of the local government. It has submitted its recommendations on 1978 and suggested the two tier set up. They are Zilla Parishad or the District Panchayat and Mandal Panchayats with population of 15,000 to 20,000. The representation of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes should be based on their population in all the Panchayats. In 1988 Thoungon Committee was established, it has recommended the constitutional recognition of the Panchayat Raj, three tier structures with village Panchayat, Mandal Panchayat and District Panchayat. It also recommended giving the judicial power to Panchayats to resolve the simple disputes at the village level, it is recommended that the system of reservation for all the three tiers of Panchayat Raj bodies should be as per population. In case of the areas with more tribal population i.e. more than 30 per cent, the chairman of the body should be the member from the scheduled tribes. Vice-chairmanship of all the Panchayat bodies should be reserved for SC and ST member.

The political decentralization provides the local unit of administration, through which the basic needs of the public like food, housing and water can be ensured in the simplest manner. The concept of Democratic decentralization was the practical form of Panchayat Raj to discover the local needs and interests and also stimulate the local inventiveness in the fields of development. Gandhi said that “In the village the means of production of the elementary necessities of life are to be freely available to all as God’s air and water” and are not to be a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others.”¹⁸⁶ It is the best arrangement to bridge the link between local to central. The diversified situation on the basis of sociological, economical, religious and political: it is making use in the best possible way to devaluate the responsibilities, rights and authority equally to all. It is used as the most important settlement to utilize the resources without any kind of distinctions as local and regional. It has the political as well as the economic values of its own. Gandhi wanted to establish the equality and justice in common to all as John Rawls stated that “political theory begins with the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation between free and equal persons. The principle of justice for such a society characterize its fair terms of cooperation by specifying its citizens basic rights and duties and by regulating the distribution of its economic benefits.”¹⁸⁷ Gandhi emphasized more on the co-operation among the individuals as well as among villages of the country. Justice and equality in all the respects of national life can be attained by practicing his Philosophy of political decentralization through its functioning form of Panchayat Raj system. There not only the power but also the duties and rights to be distributed equally among the nationals. As result, the development of the nation can be identified with the development of the individuals.

¹⁸⁶. Thomas Vettickal, Op. cit, p. 117. cited

¹⁸⁷. Donald M. Borchert, *Encyclopedia of philosophy* 2nd edition, p. 257.

The understanding on the conception of political decentralization in Gandhi's views shows that it is the best path leading process of the present day society towards the welfare oriented society of all. The mechanism of power sharing in the field of politics has deep roots in both western and eastern traditions. The great visionary and activist, Gandhi gave clear functional picture about political decentralization. In its normative level Gandhi gave theoretical frame for political decentralization. Followed by the perpetual dialectics, he suggested the parallel function of limiting the state power as well as creates the people institutions at all levels. In experimental level he suggested the panchayat raj system for the successful function. His other principles of socio-economic and moral are very relevant to the present day context and these are co-relative to the concept of political decentralization. That's why Gandhi's philosophy of political decentralization can also be as the democratic decentralization. It is very supportive and ensures the public participation and representation in national life. It ensures the individual liberty, autonomy, village self-rule, self-sustenance, alliance among the villages for national sovereignty and co-ordination among the countries for welfare of the world.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Political philosophy is the reflection our collective life, our political institutions and also our patterns of family life. It is the study of the issues such as liberty, justice, property, rights, law and the enforcement of a legal code by authority. Gandhi is one of the practical idealists of the World. Whatever the principles he suggested to others he practiced in his life time. Gandhi thought that the political power is not an end but it is one of the means. In its centralized form it is more coercive, violent, dominative and exploitative. That's why he wanted to decentralize the political power with the local governmental units. Political decentralization is also called as democratic decentralization. Gandhi suggested the practical form of local government such as Panchayat Raj system. He wants to build the nation from the bottom level that means from the village level by applying the principles of self-rule and self-sustenance.

The organizations of public and government are the places of centralization versus decentralization. In fact, this is one of the dilemmas facing by the government and administration today. In addition to this the compulsions of socio-economic planning, the requirements of national integration and the consideration of defense strategy pull the administration towards centralization. As an alternative to this kind of administration, greater participation by the people, applying democracy at the grass-root level and diverting the administration towards

decentralization. Thus there is confronting and contradictory pulls and pressures. Decentralization is not only a device for the delegation or dispersal of administrative authority, but it is also a democratic method of devolution of political power.

In the centralized administration, the political power is concentrated in the hands of a few authorities. They exercise all governmental powers and any localized units of the Government such as cities and countries are subjected to exercise those powers to the central Government. A centralized Government results in the uniform, 'one-size-fits-all' approach to Government policies and programs. In addition to this, the national interests take precedence over local interests in centralized Government.

By nature human beings are the seekers of better life than the present. If we go back to history, we can realize this fact. In primitive stages, people lived with ignorance. During the evolutionary process, they became civilized. In the present civilized stage there are many divisions and many groups among human beings due to various reasons. Not only the increasing vital wants and also greed based desires, egocentric trends and demands made people to exploit neighbors or other groups. People want to enjoy benefits and better life at the cost of others through exploitation. The exploitative attitude is initially created in the hierarchical structure of the society. It has lot of scope to exploit others through power centralization. The political power centralization focuses power at one particular point. By this power centralization, the top group of this hierarchy kept more power in its hand. Those using this power exploit lower groups of this hierarchy. The exploitative attitude created power centralization. This well-developed political power centralization encourages exploitation and other evils of social disparities, caste clashes, economic inequalities, sexual domination and poverty etc. To resolve these evils of

centralization, there is an urgent need for the alternative method. At this juncture, Gandhi suggested political decentralization. By nature, it shares equal power with all and encourages the decentralized democracy and ensures equality and liberty. Political decentralization is not an isolated one; it is the byproduct of his other concepts. To understand and analyze political decentralization, along with its application in our day today affairs, one has to study, understand and assimilate his other concepts such as economic decentralization, trusteeship, swaraj, swadeshi, non-violence and other moral principles.

The political conditions of India, his experiences as the law student at London both Indian and South African experiences he encountered in public life and also in respect of racial discriminations, various influences like both western and Indian thinkers and also various religious influences that play the major role in Gandhi's reform activities in the field of politics, socio-economic and also in his ideological enrichment. The South African experiences made him courageous and the incidents he has faced in his own life made him to understand practical realities in many ways and realized the effects of the colonialism, racial discrimination, gender bias and migrant labourers pathetic conditions. There by, he started the mission of reforming the society; which gives birth to his methodological struggle such as non-violence, satyagraha, civil-disobedience and fasting. Gandhi never stated that, he is an original theorist. But his speeches, writings and social activities gave conceptual frame work and reflect him as a political philosopher. He picked up many traditional concepts from his immediate predecessors as well as from ancient texts. Gandhi's political thoughts stem from different traditions of both Eastern and Western. His ideological foundation was derived from the liberal humanism and its values. According to Gandhi, nationalism does not mean mere patriotism; it is the stepping stone to the

internationalism. His plan of new world order starts from the individual well-being, village, nation and finally to the international level.

Gandhi tried to change the basis, nature and scope of Indian politics. Subsequently he struggled to reform the means accustomed to the Indian conditions from the traditional and cultural thoughts. He changed the basis of Indian politics by promoting the public participation and lower class representation in the political activities of the Indian freedom struggle. Gandhian politics evolved from one individual to all and from one village to the villages of the universe. His political scope crossed states, nations and all limitations. Gandhi radically changed the nature of Indian politics by incorporating the traditional spiritual and ethical concepts. Basing on this background, I referred the Gandhian principles of truth and non-violence as the basis of social order and also as the instruments or techniques of socio-political dynamics. His great contribution towards the political awakening and freedom movement in different parts of the world and adaptation of non-violent strategies helps in opposing groups by respecting each other's sentiments and accommodating the views of others. In other words, Gandhi stood for the substitution of power politics through the doctrines of integrality and symmetry of ends and means.

Gandhi made the common platform for the diversified Indians in order to collect their power. He studied the fundamental principles of all religions and traditions and found truth, love, brotherhood and non-violence as the common salient features of the world religions and traditions. Under these circumstances, he formulated the Satyagraha as the suitable tool to reform the socio-economic and political life of India. Based on non-violence, he formulated the political techniques of civil disobedience, non-cooperation, fasting, hartal and other kinds. Since India is a multi-religious country, to protest against British imperialism the collective power of

all religions was a necessary condition. There by Gandhi tirelessly worked for the religious harmony. His constructive programmes brought awareness among the public that lead to the close relationship among public and the political activists. The advent of Gandhi in the Indian political horizon posed enough reasons to excite as well as attract Indians towards him and more towards his ideology, later it was called as Gandhian Philosophy. It is indeed amazing that the personality of Gandhi gripped the imagination of millions of his countrymen in the later stages overwhelming number from all over the world.

According to Gandhi, politics is the best tool to enable people to uplift their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through the elected national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect and self-regulated, then no representation is necessary. His vision of state is enlightened anarchy: in such a state everyone rules himself in such a manner that he never be a hindrance to his neighbor. That state must be based on non-violence; all the socio-economic and political activities should be practiced in a non-violent way. To him politics, religion and morality are closely related and mutually dependent in their practice. He thought that increasing state power is the greatest harm to mankind because it destroys individuality and leads to state's coercion. He said that the power obtained from love is thousand times more effective and permanent than obtained from the fear of punishment. So he used soul-force or truth-force (Satyagraha) in various forms like civil-disobedience, non-cooperation, and fasting to achieve his political end of self-rule (Swaraj). He suggested democratic form of government with decentralization of political power for minimizing the state's power as well as protecting the individual liberty. The classical statement of Thoreau reveals that 'Government is best which governs the least'. Gandhi emphasized that,

the state should have less power concentration in its hand and intended to promote freedom and maintain all kinds of equality in the society.

Gandhi desired that, the state to be free from violent elements and sought to inculcate fearlessness in the minds of people. In his concept of Swaraj, there is decentralization of political power and India was to be a confederation of thousands of self-governing and self-reliant villages and innumerable circles of village republics. But these village republics were not to be hierarchically organized; instead they would be the 'oceanic circle' of structure in their organization. In the ocean, all waves maintain similar levels and no one dominates over others. Similarly, to prevent oppression, in Gandhi's concept of Swaraj, Ramrajya or the kingdom of God ought to be established first in our own minds then only it can be established in our villages. Swadeshi; use of indigenous goods and the boycott of foreign goods were a means to attain Swaraj. He viewed that the state has to be democratic basing on non-violence and without much interference of individual freedom. He opposed the power concentration in a few or single hand. He thought that the concentration of political power leads to exploitation, inequality and promote the hierarchy in the society. According to Gandhi the state is coercive in its concentrative form of power handling. In his alternative state both the political and economic powers are to be decentralized. Hence his political philosophy is known as decentralized democracy which is the practical form his ideal state of enlighten anarchy.

The diversified facets of the world in various bases like caste, class, religion, ethnicity, language and gender impels the power centralization for the survival of the community and established domination. On one hand it will lead to the domination of specific community in the society. On the other hand, the same diversified society with its uniform policies cannot

satisfy all the needs of the communities. It is a fact that the rationale of decentralized governance is also derived from the known drawbacks of centralized decision-making at the macro governmental levels. So there is an urgent need for the emergence of political decentralization: the power sharing mechanism in our social intuitions.

Political decentralization focuses on the transfer of responsibility and authority for participation in decision making, self-determination and representation from the central government to the sub-ordinate levels of government, particularly for the formulation and implementation of policies. It can reduce or control the interference of the central government over its citizens in the aspects of socio-economic, political and cultural life. Political decentralization aims at electing the representatives through public decision. It is often associated with pluralistic politics and representative government. It also supports democratic outlook.

There are many reasons for endorsing political decentralization because of the limitations of centralized government. In the same way it needs some pre-requisites for its success. They are: awareness about the power handling and its importance by the power losers, the willingness to power sharing in order to lead peaceful life by the power holders and also by the volunteers of governmental or non-governmental organizations and other social organizations working with both the power losers and holders about the socio-economic and political affairs of the state and creating consciousness on their role in peace making process and also striving to achieve the mental and moral maturity. These are considered as the suitable techniques for the success of political decentralization. Such a kind of political decentralization can bring intrinsic values such as equality in power sharing, political participation and representation, self-rule and self-reliance,

autonomy in various levels, liberty of the individual, local governments and immediacy between individual with government.

The philosophy of political decentralization has deep roots in Western tradition; it is evidenced from the great philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and extended up to Rousseau, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, Montesquieu, Jefferson. They talked about small governments and their values. The Small government in the form of small territories has been admired since Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Montesquieu. These small units of the territory are regarded as appropriate to protect the individual rights against tyranny of the majority and to encourage political participation and also accommodation of views. Relatively on the same lines, the public merits of local democracy are highlighted by liberal thinkers like Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill. According to Plato, decentralization is the necessary condition to make the city better able to achieve the rule of law. During 17th and 18th centuries, political philosophers like Rousseau, Mill, Tocqueville, Montesquieu and Madison have suggested the small democratic units of the government to preserve the liberties of free men by the distrust of the autocratic central government in the west. Thereby Tocqueville reminded us that the might of liberated nations were constituted by municipal establishments. The spirit of liberty in the nation even if it has the free government is not possible devoid of municipal establishments. Mill corroborates this argument by pointing out that free and popular municipal institutions are parts of the peculiar training of a citizen and also the practical parts of the political education of free people.

According to Gandhi, political decentralization means sharing the political power with the people without any kind of variations. It is incorporated along with economic and moral principles with integrated political process. Through that the individuals can protect their lives

and rights. A condition such as equality through the process of sharing and non-violent means is necessary. Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization is based on the methodology of perpetual dialectics. The perpetual dialectics is the process that continuously moving with two or more opposite forces or ideas. According to him it is not only dialectically related to political power centralization but also it is relative to other kinds of contradictions and resolutions. It is ever inclusive principle against centralization. By nature it includes ethical, religious, social and also the economic problems of the worldly life. It begins and ends with the concept of truth as the system of politics. In perpetual dialectic method there are parallel politics; which simultaneously work for the control the state's power as well as creating the local institutions. People's power is institutionalized to counter the centralizing and alienating forces of the modern state. In the first part of his parallel politics he wanted to limit the state's power. The absolute authority of state on the political power compels people to obey its laws unquestionably. It is the instrument of coercion and violence. It is an inevitable concomitant of the state. In order to control the state's power, he suggested the ideal state of enlighten anarchy. It is about eradication of state tyranny and hierarchy, it is a kind of political order in which there is no separation between people and the ruler. It is self-managed, non-violent and non-hierarchal in its nature. Gandhi said that in the ideal state, there is no political power because there is no state. This means he was not fully opposed the state; he only opposed evil the activities of the state. He wanted to build the state without any interference in the individual's life and also with minimum level of power practice. The second part of his parallel politics is: creating the local governments in the form of Panchayat raj system which is known as democratic decentralization. In the other words it is called as people's institution. It is the system of politics, which is very nearest to the people with self-managed and self-regulated local organization. The decision-making and

implementation is done by the people so that they will be authoritative of this institution. It is run through the collective will of all the individuals. Panchayat raj system is the experimentation level of Gandhian philosophy of political decentralization. It has pivotal role in making decentralized democracy and of village Swaraj. To him it is the government of the people. According to Gandhi Independence must begin at the bottom level. Thus, every village will be a republic or Panchayat have full powers. The voice of people may be said to be God's voice or the voice of the Panchayat. This structure is composed of numerous villages that will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. It is based on the Gandhi's concept of oceanic structure of the society. There life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. It will be an oceanic circle whose center will be the individual and always ready to perish for the sake of village, till it becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units. Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. The functions of the Panchayat are education, recreation, protection, agriculture, industries, trade and commerce, sanitation and medical relief, justice, finance and taxation.

Gandhi's philosophy of political decentralization is the progressive way of national development. It is the perfect plan for better future of nation, based on the understanding of think globally and act locally. Gandhi visualized nationalism based on village settlement. Here village settlement does not mean the village isolation; it is a mutually co-operative, inter-dependent settlement. The national development is very consistent with political decentralization because it brings the very participative and representative nature in national activities by all. So the development of the nation implies the development of all in all the aspects of life; socio-

economic, political and moral. In order to strengthen the nation, some scholars claim the centralization but the fact is centralization of power, peace and civil society are inconsistent. To Gandhi, decentralization of power is the reasonable way to strengthen the nation. He understood the individuals of the nation are the constituent parts of the nation. So the strength of the nation consisted in strength of the individuals and the villages. In the common causes like national security, development and strength, the individuals and village governments should give their support.

In the modern world, the advent of scientific and technological advancements stimulates the power centralization based on greed and power competition. This condition is inconsistent with the peaceful life and unified development of all. In this way many new ideologies such as globalization, liberalization and imperialism are emerging in the contemporary phenomena. These ideologies are intentionally narrow, based on the thinking of ‘think locally act globally’. They are attracted by the privileged countries and privileged groups within the countries. While aspiring for the common wealth or well being of all, there is no scope in these ideologies which are based on power centralization. So it is the pre-condition to incline towards Gandhi’s Philosophy of the political decentralization. He suggested that democracy is the best form of government along with the decentralization of political power. It is known as the decentralized democracy, which is very much supportive to equality in power access by the individuals, then there is no scope to domination, exploitation and oppression, thereby the autonomy of individual as well as the village can persist. The political decentralization goes hand in hand with economic decentralization there by it protects equality in power sharing, duties, rights and justice among the individuals. Thereby Gandhi’s philosophy of political decentralization is identified as the best alternative.

In the present day context, there are misconceptions about Gandhi's philosophy and its practice. But it is the prospective programme of action for the better future of the society. Above all Gandhian Philosophy of political decentralization has full scope in its practical possibilities with the core principles of the socio-economic and moral preachings of Gandhi. As John Rawal said, Gandhi's philosophy of political decentralization is the practical scheme for the better future. It is the best option to break the existing dominative, exploitative, coercive and centralized governance system.

For successful implementation of democratic decentralization, Gandhi suggested Panchayat Raj system. This is called as the 'democracy within democracy' because it has more autonomy and liberty within the democratic state. In its experimental level Panchayat Raj system is considered as the local institution. It is ruled by the adult individuals of that region, they are genuinely elected by the local people. It is the best option to protect the self-rule and self-sufficiency of the individual, village and the nation. In practice Panchayat Raj system has some crucial implications. It is followed by the caste favoritism, nepotism and the misuse of power by the heads of that panchayats. The existing Indian caste system is the biggest hurdle to the success of democratic decentralization. There are numerous evidences in respect of caste oppression at panchayat level administration in India. Even though Gandhi worked for the upliftment of the lower caste and downtrodden people, his conviction on the Varnashrama Dharma has the contradiction with other principles. So it has to be reconstructed. But some extent political decentralization and Panchayat Raj system give more scope to the participation and representation by the lower caste peoples, minorities and women. It is fact that man's life is influenced by the political system in which he lives. Political system is the most determinant

factor in human life. So the future of human society whether it is better or worst depends upon the political system of the state.

The democracy that is being practiced today in the world is betrayed. It has ceased to be an inspiring ideal because it is autocratic, ethno-centric and force-minded. It cannot preserve or defend. Democracy cannot co-exist with colonialism, exploitation or racial supremacy. It is rooted in liberty, equality and non-violence. The modern industrial urban civilization is finding difficult in cultivating values and virtues. High technology leads to large scale operations, automation, anonymity and alienation and centralization of power.

The third world countries need moral leadership that provides political decision clubbing with religious divinity. They have strong roots in their religion and culture. They are humanistic in their outlook and contributing to the evolutionary process of world civilization. They incorporate the moral and spiritual approaches of the East and the pragmatic concerns of the West, try to balance them for the sustainable civilization. They also focus on the way of life that is congruent with value system that has reverence and provides dignity every one. Their outlook should be based on long-term view of life that ensures equal opportunity for the full flowering of each individual in a balanced integrated and just society.

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