

CHAPTER-IV

SWARAJ AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

At the time when our polity is groaning under the crushing burden of a number of miseries like decay of moral values of politicians, corruption, casteism, criminalization, communal disharmony, defection, nepotism, lack of participation of people in decision-making process and struggling with the nightmare of a terrifying future, the course indicated by the unerring fingers of the father of the nation should come as a solace to all those who seek happiness, peace and goodwill for all.

Although the roots of democracy have struck very deep yet the stem is getting rotten due to the spectacular spread of the cancerous germs of corruption, favoritism, nepotism, violence, poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment at every level. Thus on the one hand, venality has made its presence felt at all levels, spreading from top to bottom of the political system involving, even the top bureaucrats and politicians, on the other hand violence has assumed gigantic shape in political violence of the type of assassination of political adversaries, terrorizing voters, booth-capturing, rigging of election, violence in legislative chamber and even assassination of the Prime Minister. But what is most alarming, debasing and damaging of democracy is the nexus between politicians, businessmen, bureaucrats and criminals. Despite many laws, the whole electoral process and system in India is becoming less and less honest mirror of public opinion. The power is assuming more and more credible forms. The voters are bribed and often elections are rigged. The candidates are merchandised rather than elected. One of the saddest aspects of election times is that politics overrides all human consideration. Therefore, if the democracy is to survive,

then the remedy lies in Gandhi's teachings and messages and his path to resolve conflicts. Arnold Toynbee has rightly observed:" At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way emperor Atoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principles of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions. Here we have an attitude and spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family, and in the Atomic Age this is the only alternative of destroying ourselves."¹

Gandhi claimed to be a convinced democrat. As he said, "I claim to be the greatest democrat of modern times."²

However, he was not concerned with the form or the facade of democracy. If he was enamoured of democracy, it was because he considered it to be a form of government that promotes the welfare of the masses or at least aspires to attain common good. As an idealist he was concerned with largest good for the people and felt that such an objective is attainable only through democracy. But witnessing the working of modern democracies, he felt disillusioned. What he wanted was democracy in its pristine form and with real content. As he said, "True democracy is what promotes the welfare of the people."³ According to Gandhi, real democracy should have meaning not for a few but for all including the poorest and even for the maimed, the blind and the deaf. He did not believe in mere lip sympathy for the ideal which comes so easily. The entire social order should be such that this ideal should be achieved in practice. A genuine democracy calls for a higher degree of seriousness of purpose and a sense of urgency. Gandhi realized that once people are awakened they would become a

revolutionary force. Their minimum expectations would have to be satisfied, otherwise they would explode. This explosion could take many unpleasant and ugly forms.

Gandhi was a votary of the doctrine of purity of means for the attainment of any noble end and he scrupulously adhered to the belief that a noble democracy is unattainable by upsurge of venality and violence. He asserted categorically, "Democratic government is a distant dream as long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere polity."⁴

As far as venality is concerned, Gandhi desired to get democracy out of its sordid influence by keeping politics at a higher plane. Democracy he believed depends for its survival and proliferation on certain basic values, creating code of conduct and mode of living of its participants. It calls for noble character, higher sense of commitment and cretin value oriented faith.⁵

Gandhi all along emphasized the practice the practice of self-restrain for the success of democracy." Real rule" he said," is self-rule or self-control".⁶ It is by restraining the irrational desires and unsocial prohibits that true freedom or Swaraj, that constitutes the essence of democracy, can be enjoyed.

Besides, Gandhi stressed on due performance of one's duties rather than insistence on one's rights in the interest of democracy and assured us, "All rights flowed from duties."⁷ For the success of democracy, he reminded us of our responsibilities. As he said," Democracy requires that everyone, men or women, should realise his or her responsibility."⁸

The relevance of Swaraj to solve Political Challenges:- In present time corruption is a serious problem. To remove this problem Gandhi's concepts give a remedy for a problem

By the year 1938, Gandhi had been aware how corruption was creeping into the political system and vitiating it, and how people in government and legislature had become power hungry and self-seeking. Left unchecked it may spell, in no time, the death of true democracy. He, therefore, said, "It is true that violence, untruth and corruption have made inroads enough to warrant drastic measures in order to prevent decay."¹⁰ Accordingly, he prescribed code of conduct for public officials like legislators, Ministers and Governors, etc. He expected them to accept different offices with a spirit of service and to as opportunities for self-aggrandizement. Hence he wrote in Harijan, "If India is to be free in the real sense of term, single-eyed devotion to service without any desire for reward or lust for power, thought of our country rather than of us is needed."⁹

The relevance of Swaraj to solve Political Challenges-

In the age of political decline Gandhian concept is a way. Today when there is rapid criminalization and erosion of moral values in Politics, the message of Gandhi about Religion in Politics seems to be more relevant. "We are proud of Gandhian political culture which gives specific importance to the moral aspects of politics, to intellectual and saintly orientation to political action, to purity of means for pure end, to the doctrine of truth and non-violence to the obedience to the dictates of inner conscience; and to the ideal of social justice and freedom."¹⁰

Gandhi like Gokhale wanted a spiritualization of politics. But Gandhi's attachment to the concept of non-violence was for deeper and more extensive than that of Gokhale.¹¹ He wanted to mix religion into politics for the service of his country and humanity as whole. To him, "there is no politics devoid of

religion. They sub serve religion. Politics bereft of religion is a death trap because they kill the soul."¹² Therefore, to him, Religion means the assertion of unity with God. It is a dynamic force. So the incorporation of religion in politics means a progressive movement towards justice and truth, because a man of religion will never tolerate any kind of oppression and exploitation.¹³

If the people want to root out the corrupt and the dishonest politicians then his concept of religion in politics cannot be separated. "Religious life means a purified and chastened life and such a life is bound to cast immense social and political impact. If politics does not bother about the ethics and morality it will certainly lead to such a state of affairs where humanity will be compelled to crush down and will be lost in the vacuum."¹⁴ Religion according to Gandhi was not merely a means for personal purification but it was an immense powerful social bond and politics divorced from religion would be absolutely meaningless and we would fail to understand our national institutions.¹⁵ He was in favour of the very fundamentals of religion, which is morality and goodness. By the religious basis of politics Gandhi meant the concept of moral right in place of the divine right of rules, princes and other ascendant groups.

Being a practical man and accepting that politics cannot simply be abolished, Gandhi sought to purify politics by showing that its sovereign principle is neither coercive nor manipulative power, but moral and social progress, leading to healthy growth and all-round development. Through Satyagraha he sought to introduce religious values into politics by extending the rule of domestic life into the political arena. Ascribing the underlying

continuity of mankind to the sacrificial exercise of soul-force within family, he was convinced that the same energies could be brought to bear self-consciously in the larger sphere of the life. For the Satyagrahi, committed to truth, the only power that can be legitimately exercised is the capacity to suffer for the errors of others and on behalf of the welfare of all-whether it is the family, the nation or even the world. Gandhi believes that the Satyagrahi should be active in politics if he can stand firmly for social justice and initiate constructive change. He further advocated voluntary poverty as an essential prerequisite for any social or political worker who wished to remain untainted by the wasteful greed of power politics. He even maintained that possessions could be anti-social. It is not enough to continue possessing goods in practice under the elusion that one has given them up in spirit. Possessions, he believed, should be held in trust at the disposal of those who need them in real sense.

Today, we need men of character with all morality in politics if want to save the democratic quality of India. Everybody wants that there must be purity in every field of administration so that they may lead peaceful life but what we see, everywhere there is corruption, there is criminalization of politics. Therefore, the need of the day is to incorporate the values teaching given by Gandhi regarding religion in politics. If every individual who enters in politics follow the teachings of Gandhi regarding morality then we can have true democracy in India. Today, Indian politics, requires good men with good intension in Gandhian mould having moral forces behind their thinking as well as deeds.

Gandhi realised that corruption in high places stemmed from offices and the paraphernalia attached to such offices.

Besides, officers indulge in ostentuous living, try to meet such expenses through corrupt method. Hence in order to ensure emergence of true democracy without corruption, he called upon people holding high offices to consider themselves as servants of the people rather than their master. To root out corrupt practices and financial dishonesty from public life, he urged upon those who held public offices to renounce ostentatious and stylistic living with glaze and glamour, because "Independence" is not synonymous with stylishness or pomp. We have to cut our clock according to our cloth. There is no merit in hiding our poverty. India's status in the world depends upon her moral supremacy."¹⁶ So he urged upon them to build up their "moral capital". "The leaders", he said, "have the reins of government and the disposal of millions of rupees in their hands. They have to be most vigilant."¹⁷

Gandhi expected Ministers to be "self-less and incorruptible",¹⁸ They should not be wealth-hunters but be satisfied with minimum financial reward in return for the services render to the people. "The Ministers" he said cannot live as "Sahib Log."¹⁹ On the other hand, "They should make all feel at every step that they are servants, not masters of the nation."²⁰ They must be men of flawless characters and shall so behave both in private and public life that people shall have faith in their honesty and integrity. "The Ministries have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be like Caesar's Wife, above suspicion in everything."²¹

Further, the Minister must be above favouritism and nepotism. Their kith and kin, their friends and relatives shall not get any special favour from the government. "They may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or

friends."²² The facilities provided to them for proper discharge of their official duties should not be misused for private purposes. "Ministers", said Gandhi "should not use for private work, facilities provided by Government for official duties."²³

Gandhi missed no opportunity to expose corruption, just posing the extravagant ways of the rulers with the poverty of the mass of the people. He used to cite the corruption as one of the main causes of India's backwardness. He waged a relentless battle against this evil, in fact the system which it was heir to, but he was not slow to realize that transfer of power from British to Indian hands would not automatically exercise the evil, especially when the old administrative system continued to prevail. He was aware that after assuming office his own followers might fall into the ways of their British predecessors. He made himself the watchdog of public behaviour of his followers even at the risk of offending many of them.

There is an interesting example of the Mahatma objecting to the Andhra leader, the late Sh. T. Prakasam becoming Chief Minister of Madras in 1946 because he had appropriated to himself a purse of Rs. 30,000 given to him by the people of Andhra. Gandhi contended that the money was given to Prakasam not for his personal use, but in capacity as a public man. He, therefore, argued that it should have been made over to the party. When Prakasam ultimately offered to do so, Gandhi pertinently asked him how he proposed to receive. Prakasam could have no doubt obtained the sum from any of his rich friends, but in Gandhi's eyes it was tantamount to corruption, because in return for the money they would expect some favour from him when he become chief minister. The Mahatma took this stand inspired by the fact that T. Prakasam had thrown away

a roaring practice at the bar when he plunged into the national struggle and had also given away to the party his entire property with some hundreds of thousands of rupees.²⁴

Gandhi would not allow well-to-do people to accept any salary whatsoever for discharging their duties as Ministers. Besides, if Ministers had to accept any payment at all, it should be only enough to maintain themselves and, not to make a huge saving. As he said in this connection, "The British Scale of pay cannot be copied by them except at their cost. It will be indecorous for a monied man to draw the full or any payment. The payment is meant for those who cannot easily afford to render free service."²⁵

For members of legislature Gandhi has also prescribed very stringent code of conduct. Like the Ministers the Legislators should also be men of dedicated self-less service, without expecting any honour or reward. He said, "The attraction should never be the honour that a seat in the legislature is said to give. The desire and opportunity for service can be the only incentive."²⁶ As he further said, "It is altogether wrong to think that the election carries any honour with it. It is a post of service, if one is fit for the post as one for making a few rupees while the Assembly lasts."²⁷ The legislators shall, like the Ministers, consider themselves as servants of the people and accept for their public service the minimum from the state. Even the well-to-do among the legislators like the well-to-do Ministers shall not accept any payment for such public service, if they can afford to go without it.

Gandhi prescribed that only selfless, able and incorruptible people should contest for seats in the legislature. They need be free from craze for office, self-advertisement and running down of

opponents. They shall be men of such transparent character and pure conduct that people shall voluntarily nominate them and elect them for the service rendered by them in the past.

To avoid extravagant expenditure incurred in election to legislatures leading to corruption and malpractice. Gandhi advocated indirect election to the legislatures with Panchayats as the base. Similarly, it has been pointed out: "By his attempt at purification of politics, Gandhi tried to wash out the idea of using politics for personal gains. Politics should not be used for sharing and exercising power. But political work must ever be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress."²⁸ In Gandhi's view political power should be used for the benefit of the humanity. To gain political power should not be an end but the means by which the lot of masses is improved.

Capacity to take political power should be in exact proportion to the ability to achieve success in the constructive efforts. He argued, "it is an illusion to think that M.L. As are the guides of the voters. Voters do not send representatives to the Assemblies in order to be guided by them. On the contrary, they are sent there to carry out people's wishes. The people are, therefore, the guides, not the M.L.As. the latter are servants, the former masters."²⁹ Gandhi further stressed, "If we look around the world we shall find that the best guidance is given by those outside. If that were not so, a rot would set in all governments, because the fields for guidance is vast and the Assembly is a very small thing. Parliaments are, after all, a mere drop in the ocean of national life."³⁰

When the Congress first decided to accept power in 1937, Gandhi's initial reaction was that Congress should accept office only if it was found to be in larger interest of the nation. He was

reluctant to advise the Congress to accept power as an end in itself. Gandhi also felt that once the Congress was in office, it might be tempted to abuse power.³¹ Therefore, in his last Testament on January 29, 1948. Gandhi warned the Congress about the dangers of the power politics and solemnly recommended its dissolution of Congress as political party and turned it into Lok Sevak Sangh because he was aware that after assuming office his own followers might fall into the ways of their British predecessors. In May 1939, he told the Gandhi Seva Sangh Workers, "I would go to the length of giving the whole Congress Organization a decent burial, rather than put up with the corruption that is rampant."³²

Deviations from the standards set by such an omnibus personality as Gandhi are inevitable. But in no sphere of political life deviation from the Gandhian legacy is as sharp and glaring as in the personal conduct and integrity of politicians. It is not really a deviation but a right reversal of the legacy.

The million crowds that witnessed the hoisting of the tricolour in the 15th August 1947 and the millions in all parts of the country who were a part of such exciting scenes elsewhere did not aspire for the stars. They did not ask for milk and honey flowing through India after the British left. But they had not bargained for what they are living through today with layers and layers of corruption around. They did expect their country would be better-freer, cleaner and more decent place for them and their progeny to live in."³³

It is high time for the country to change the chemistry of politics, and work for the promotion of constitutional democracy on Gandhian lines. Otherwise, if the present state of affairs is

allowed to continue unabated, then India will soon be entering a Dark Age of her own making.

The relevance of Swaraj to solve social challenges- In a vast country like India inhabited by people following a variety of religions, speaking various languages and observing different cultures, customs and traditions, communal harmony is absolutely necessary for national integration, peace and prosperity. Besides, the Gandhi's views on communal harmony especially in the face of the rising tide of the communalism and fundamentalism are quite relevant.

It is unfortunate that even after more than five decades of independence we are unable to root out the problem of communalism and the causes which promote the feeling of hatred of one community against the other. "The communalism has been a fall out of sectarian politics which is both a hangover of the British rule and the consequences of partition. Earlier it was a meace but now it threatens to be weapon of extermination of a minority. Its earlier outburst was more among Muslims then Hindus. It brought about, to start with a kind of alienation of the Muslims from the Hindus. Latter, by the forties of the last century, this developed into a rage of Muslims against the Hindus. The communalism of Hindus was then not as virulent, Gandhi was able to contain it; it surfaced now and then but remained by and large ineffective. However, after partition this gained strength and succeeded in widening the divide between the two communities."³⁴

Today, when the communal riots have become day-to-day phenomenon we cannot ignore the views of Mahatma Gandhi on communal harmony.

Mahatma Gandhi preached non-violence throughout his life and lived and died for communal harmony and unity. He was such a great man who never felt, thought and acted in terms of communalism or narrow Sectarianism. He fought for the safeguard of the rights and interests of the minorities. Therefore, we cannot forget the contribution of this great man of India for communal unity.

"He was the unhappy man, upset and very much hurt with the violence and communal hatred all around him. It is a fact that his soul was restless until the last moment of his life and he wished that rather than he is a helpless witness to communal (Hindu-Muslim) atrocities, he should be removed from this earth."³⁵ His policy as well as intention always was to ask the Hindus to leave it to the Muslims not to do anything, which could hurt their religious feelings, and to ask the Hindus to see to it that nothing was done by them which could hurt the Muslims.

Gandhi believed that irrespective of one's religion and faith one had to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of our motherland. He said, "In order to realise this every Congress man or anybody else would have to cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for other faiths as he has for his own."³⁶

Similarly, he was not happy while listening to the disgraceful cry at the railway stations such as Hindu water and Muslim tea and separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in schools and colleges, communal schools, colleges and hospitals.³⁷ In 1938, Gandhi elaborated: "My Hinduism is not sectarian. It includes all that I know to be best in Islam,

Christianity, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. I approach politics and everything else in religious spirit. Truth is my religion and Ahimsa is the only way of its realization. I have rejected for once and for all the doctrine of sword. The secret stabbings of innocent persons and the speeches I read in the papers are hardly the thing leading to peace or an honourable settlement."³⁸

According to him religious intolerance was one of the major reasons of hatred of one against other. Gandhi had admitted that religion was the personal affair of each individual but it must not be mixed up with politics for that matter.³⁹ And the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians, the parsees, the Jews should be Indians first and Indians last.⁴⁰

Mahatma Gandhi was totally opposed to destroying places of worship, temples, or Mosques as retaliation. He was firmly opposed to any such idea. He said, "Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics.... Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples of seeking to destroy mosques, and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples."⁴¹

Gandhi's these remarks are quite relevant to the Ram janma bhoomi Babri Masjid controversy today. If he had been alive today, he would not have approved at all the entire Ram janam bhoomi controversy much less the demolition of Babri mosque which was an act of vandalism. Infact, if Mahatma Gandhi's version of extremely tolerant Hindusim had prevailed, our country would not have undergone the communal disaster it faced after the demolition of Babri Masjid at the instance of the VHP-BJP. Infact, what the VHP is propagating is what Gandhi

denounced as fanaticism. In such matters of fanaticism, Gandhi spares neither Hindus nor Muslims.

Thus, it is seen that Mahatma Gandhi's way of promoting communal harmony was to emphasize tolerance of others' ways of believing and worshiping. Gandhi advocated mutual tolerance by which not only conflict could be resolved but also the ground for cooperation between the Hindus and the Muslims could be prepared. Religious difference does not necessarily lead to conflict. It is only when people become conscious of their religious difference and think that their religion is true and other's false then the trouble starts. It is because such consciousness leads to disrespect and contempt for other's religion. Gandhi advocated that all religions are more or less true and therefore, one should not revile the other's faith. "Each must respect the other religion, must refrain from even secretly thinking ill of the other. We must political dissuade members of all the communities indulging in bad language against one another. Only a serious endeavour in this direction can remove the estrangement between us."⁴² Similarly, "Differences of religious opinion will persist to the end of time, toleration is the only thing that will enable persons belonging to different religions to live as good neighbours and friends."⁴³ It is true that communalists preach intolerance and hatred against people of other faiths and communities but there is more to communalism than mere hatred and intolerance. Above all, there is struggle for power, and religion is used as a mobilizing force by the communalists. In order to create communal harmony, this factor has to be taken into account.

Gandhi pointed out that he was as much as idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he believed that all Hindus

and Muslims upheld the same views whether they admitted it or not. He said that mankind thirsted for symbolism. He questioned: were not Masjids or Churches or for that matter Gurudwaras in reality the same as Mandirs (temples)? He answered that God resided everywhere no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of men. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such a sentiment was working of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Muslim Gandhi's advice was that if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship. That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance.⁴⁴

When we come to Gandhi's approach to communal harmony, we find that Gandhi opposed communal virus of return blow for blow which is nothing but perpetuating our mental slavery and tearing up our motherland into bits, namely, Hindustan, Pakistan, Brahninistan, and Achhutistan⁴⁵ and now one more such a name-Khalistan. He sacrificed himself so that a united India might live together.

It has been seen that we have grown more and more intolerant in recent years. We can learn a great deal about tolerance and non-violence from Gandhi. What is most inspiring in Gandhi's life is his sense of dedication to peace and non-violence even in the midst of communal frenzy during the days of the Partition. Be it Noakhali or Bihar or Delhi, he risked his life to restore sanity among people with great impartiality. And he laid down his life for saving the people who did not belong to his

religious community. "Today, movements are launched with communal violence and quelled with more violence. Bloodshed continues unabated, communal riots erupt on the flimsiest of provocations. This is more important in the sense that we have been unable to overcome or stop violence by violence or forcible methods. It is the height of communal virus when we have a general rather wrong impression that while a person is being killed, in violent incidents in Delhi, we say he would be Sikh and if another killed in Punjab, he would be a Hindu. Whereas truth is that violence does not see a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh or anybody else. Such a thinking creates undesirable and unethical values such as anger, hatred, suspicion and spirit of revenge."⁴⁶ Therefore, there is confusion. Such confusion cannot be removed until and unless we all, irrespective of our caste, colour and creed cultivate in us higher values and virtues such as liberal attitude, "truthfulness, humility, compassion, tolerance and loving kindness,"⁴⁷ which Gandhi preached throughout his life.

"Accordingly, Gandhi's approach to communal harmony has a meaning, a worth and is meaningful step in the proper direction but this single step should not be considered as a panacea or a single pill or tablet course for the eradication of a serious disease of communalism. However, this one step of humility, tolerance, liberal attitude, self-restraint, self-purification, love, compassion and loving kindness can show us the proper way to go ahead for the second step to reach our destination – communal harmony, peace and amity."⁴⁸

Therefore, it is necessary to follow the values of Mahatma Gandhi to improve the present conditions which are responsible for hatred among the people of different religions.

To solve cast Problem Gandhi had faith in social, economic, political democratic order in society. In the social sphere, Gandhi upholds the Varnashramdharma, though not the caste-system as it exists today. Varna in its real meaning, Gandhi thinks, is extinct today. In its ideal sense, Varna is not only for Hindus but for the whole humanity. He defines the law of Varna thus, "The law of Varna means that everyone shall follow as a matter of dharma duty the hereditary calling of his forefathers in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics. He will earn his livelihood by following that calling. He may not hoard riches but devote the balance for the good of the people."⁴⁹ Gandhi lays stress on functions being hereditary because hereditary is the law of nature. But he is not for rigid divisions. Thus, Varna is intimately connected with birth. Varnashramdharma defines man's mission on earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches to explore different means of livelihood, on the contrary, man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker. Gandhi pleaded for the restoration of the essential principle on which the original Varna was based – the elimination of competition and the realization of common good through duties done in proportion to one's attainments and faculties. In Varnashrama there was and there should be no prohibition of intermarriage or interdining. Gandhi observes: "people of different varnas may intermarry and interdine....a brahman who marries a shudra girl, or vice versa, commits no offence against the law of varna."⁵⁰ Thus he accepted no discrimination of high or low.

On the subject of reservations in jobs and services, Gandhi's concept are very relevant today. Gandhi believed in

social and economic equality and more so in equality of opportunity, especially for those he called Harijans. However, he was totally opposed to reservations in jobs and services on the basis of social categories as that was tantamount to compromising the standard to merit in them. Moreover, such reservation removed the incentive for improvement and Endeavour in those on whom these benefits were bestowed. He favored special opportunities for education and training for the underprivileged sections of society, especially the Harijans. This would naturally widen the scope of their employment and betterment. But successive government have acquired a nested interest in carrying on the policy of reservations and, in the process, festered a feeling of antagonism towards the reserved categories among the rest of the population. What is required is political courage to phase out of the policy of reservations and for the government to fallow a comprehensive plane for securing social justice and equal opportunity for all, particularly at the grass-roots level.

The relevance of the concept of Swaraj to solve Environmental Challenges- The modern man explained his environment, both human and non-human. The modern large-scale technology for mass production is inherently violent ecologically damaging and self defeating in terms of non-renewable resources. Gandhi's Swaraj suggested a numerous methods of solve these various problems in the modern period: pollution of air, water and cultivable land, depletion of non-renewable resources, dangers of nuclear energy, overcrowding of cities, increasing hold of multi-national corporations, loss of individual freedom and initiative etc, are mainly due to large-scale technology. Therefore, the modern scientists have to divert

their attention from large-scale technology to small-scale and intermediate technology. The scientists should devise men methods and equipments for production.⁵¹

The new means of production should be so cheap that everyone can own them.

Such small scale operations are always less harmful to the natural environment than the large-scale ones.

These new means of production are non-violent and ensure permanent use of nature by man.

Theses equipments must be compatible with man's need for creativity.

Such technology leads to progressive decentralization of population, means of production and political and economic power. The society with such technology will have more humanly satisfying life for more people and there will be real self-governing democracy. Grandman Swaraj insisted on simple and cheap means of production which can be owned and operated by the ordinary man with adequate scope for his creativity. Further we have agreed with Gandhiji a Swaraj that the production of the masses based on new technology is conducive so decentralization, is compatible with the laws of ecology and is gentle in its use of scarce resources. We called this technology intermediate technology or self-help technology is superior to the primate technology but is cheaper and simpler than super technology of the modern period.⁵²

The minister for education of Government of India, while addressing the Indian institute of Technology at madras, appealed to the Indian technologists to devise such means of production as are economically viable and can use locally available resources in terms of men and material. This only

indicates needs for new means of production which can make proper use of natural resources and solve co employment and environment problem.

In order to grow more and more crops, man should not indiscriminately make use of fertilizer and pesticides. The excessive application of fertilizer and pesticides fill the living organisms in the soil. If the permanent fertility of the soil is to be ensures, man should depends on the natural manure. Gandhiji emphasized natural manure.

In the long run the world has to depend on renewable resources like solar energy, wind waves, tidal energies etc. Gandhiji after recommended the use of non-renewable resources.⁵³

If the evil effects of big cities are to be avoided, we have to emphasize small scale technology. It is to be noted that small scale technology and small town's go together. As Gandain economic system is based on self-contained villages, there will no constant emigration of people from the village to the cities.

The economic empire built by the multi- national corporations with the help of the large scale technology can be dismantled only through intermediate and small scale technology.

The small scale and the cottage industries do not disturb dynamical equilibrium within the biosphere. They do not pollute the air and water. Therefore, the people can be free from the various pollutants.⁵⁴

In order to conserve the non renewable resources for large period, the people have to curb their insatiable desire for higher and higher standard of living. Gandhiji emphasized simple living which solves a number of pressing economic problem.

The Relevance of Swaraj to Solve Economic Challenges

To solve unemployment problem, Gandhi gave the idea of village industry and village Swaraj. To stop, migration from rural to urban areas and to present the growth of dual economy in developing countries. E.F. Schumacher who had recognized the importance of Gandhi an economy suggested the importance of Gandhian economy suggested the following measures⁵⁵: (a) An agro-industrial structure should be created in the rural and small town areas. (b) The centers of production should be widespread. (c) The means of production should be simple and cheap so as to create a large number of workplaces without heavy investment and (d) the material for production should be available and products are to be meant for local consumption. (e) Output man is not important. The primary consideration is to maximize work potentialities for the unemployed and the underemployed. For a poor man the opportunity to work is the greatest of all considerations.

For rural based economy, decentralized production and distribution of goods, simple and cheap means of production and employment to everyone in one's place reveals the relevance of Gandhi an approach to the labour surplus societies to solve their unemployment problem and to prevent the cities from breaking down under the impact of industrialization.

J.D. Sethi, the reputed economist, Marxian, turned Gandhian, in an interview with 'Washington watch' maintained that Gandhiji and Mao-Tse Tung were of the same opinion that the pattern of economic system to be set up in the post revolutionary stage should not follow the classical pattern either of the soviet economy or of the western type.⁵⁶ Industries are to

be taken to the villages rather than rural people going to the urban centers.

To solve rural poverty, Gandhi not only emphasized agriculture but also cottage and small-scale industries. He focused his attention on the non-agriculture aspect of the rural economy also. He wanted diversified economic activities in the village and thus stood for all round development of the rural India. Dr. V.K. R.V. Rao, the noted Indian economist said that the Indian economy has grown on the basis of class market and not on the basis of mass market during the last thirty years.⁵⁷ This class market consists of thirty million people who are urban people, powerful land lords and presents. Gandhiji emphasize the products for mass market. The need of the hour in India is to produce those goods which are meant for mass consumption. Mass consumption will lead to greater employment opportunities and better standard of living for the masses.

The economic policy statement of the Janta Party stated that there is need to develop an alternative system both to the capitalism and the communism. It proposed to build the Gandhi and socialism based on economic and political decentralization and such a society is based on self-employment.⁵⁸ In the opinion of the former finance minister of Karnataka the western technology cannot solve the unemployment problem of India. It is only the cottage and the small industries which can solve it. He illustrated his point with examples and figures.⁵⁹ Under large-scale technology, one lakhs rupees are to be interested to create employment for one man. On the contrary under cottage industries, twenty to lardy thousands rupees are sufficient to provide employment for one man. The Khaki industry which has given employment to seventy fie thousand people in Karnataka

have been allotted only Rs. Twelve Crore. But the spinning mill worth rupees three hundred crore. Giving figures about employment in the ground nut oil industry in Karnataka, the Ex-furnace minister said that Karnataka produces about seven lakh tons of groundnuts. If rupees four cores are invested in a scheme, four thousand groundnut crushers can be established and they can be established and they can crush four lakh tons of groundnut. Country to this, rupees fifty crore are to be invested in large-scale industries to crush and contract the same quantum of groundnut oil. All these figures indicate the vast scope for employment opportunities under cottage industries in India. Thus, for the removal of unemployment in India, for ensuring increasing purchasing power of the rural masses and for all round economic development of rural India through cottage and small-scale industries, Gandhian suggestions hold good even to this day.

Moreover to solve unemployment problem Gandhiji recognized the right to private property subject to two conditions: Firstly, the private property should be retained through personal labour and it should not be a source for parasite life. Secondly, for surplus income, the property owners should act as trustees. Many rational thinkers agree that in small scale enterprises private property ownership is natural, just and fruitful. In the medium scale enterprise, the medium scale enterprises, the owner should act as a trustee. He shall not take more than what he requires reasonably. All large scale industries are to be owned by the state. J.D. Sethi maintained that the Gandhi concept of trusteeship is an alternative to all systems of organization.⁶⁰ It combines in itself the good qualities of both the capitalistic and the communistic systems private imitative and

enterprises of the farmer and the economic concern for all of the latter. While it avoids the exploitation inherent in the capitalist system, it also does away with the soulless bureaucratic management peculiar to the communistic system. So Gandhi's theory of trusteeship' appeared to be twisted to justify exploitation of man by man thereby perpetuating economic inequality.

In terms of Swadeshi, which did not merely denote, belonging to one's country out also to the immediate neighborhood, is extremely important for our times. Local institutions and organizations for managing local affairs have either dwindled or become non-existent with the result that we have lost faith in ourselves to do anything and constantly rely on the authorities to solve our local problem. The need of the hour is to arouse popular consciousness about local issues and try to resolve them through voluntary cooperation. People in the field of appropriate and indigenous technology are showing ways in which even things like electricity can be produced locally, rendering huge dams unnecessary. The indigenous water harvesting technology being tried out in various parts of India would have met with Gandhi's whole hearted approval. Conservation of Resources was an article of faith with him.

The doctrine of Swadeshi also assumes significance in the face of the economic and cultural imperialism launched by multinational corporations in developing countries. The government and the people need to make concerted efforts to stop the march of the multinationals to promote the consumption of indigenous products with India's man power and agricultural resources, it must be obvious even to say that the emphasis in production should be on small scale and cottage

industries which would do justice to India's resources bring about substantial uplift of the rural poor, who compose the overwhelming majority of the country's population. Concept of swaraj was wholly in favour of small scale production, it being most beneficial for humanity-man would not be uprooted from his native soil or lose his empathy with nature. This may sound like turning the clock back, but may well become necessary very soon.

Through Swaraj Gandhi's persistent emphasis on sound management of agricultural production in India assumes great significance in the context of the corrupt global food and unemployment crises, which have affected India as well as. It would be relevant to quote M.S. Swaminathan, the celebrated agricultural scientist and father of the Green Revolution in India, on the issue, "Carefully planned agricultural progress can help to create simultaneously more food, income and jobs. It is only agriculture, including crop and animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and agro-processing, which can promote job led economic growth. Modern industry, in contrast promotes jobless growth, which will lead to joyless growth in population rich nations.⁶¹ Thus the life based on agriculture and cottage and small-scale industries will give a man community life, sense of belonging and leisure to know about his neighbors. Under such conditions man can peacefully and happily live with nature. Such life will be free from anxiety of tomorrow and his next door competitor. Social tensions will be removed by maintaining and fostering the family bonds and the community feelings.

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