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## Editorial

THE CHINESE INTRUSION into India and the clash in the Galwan valley on the border is the most serious military confrontation the two nuclear powers ever had in the last fifty years. The incident has created a deep chasm in the relations between the two countries and there has been a further worsening of the situation even after several rounds of talks between military commanders at the ground level. It has now become quite clear that the Chinese claims of peaceful rise to superpower status ring hollow. It is not only China's intrusions into Indian territory that is worrisome. The claims for territory of other countries including Bhutan, friendly Nepal and even Russia make it part of a larger project. There are signs that the Chinese Belt and Road initiative in Pakistan also may run into rough weather once the full gamut of development projects are completed. Disputes with several countries in the South China sea, the clampdown on Hong Kong and the power posturing against Taiwan suggest that China wants to pursue an aggressive policy to achieve great power status.

China has always remained a puzzle for India. Even when Xi Jinping visited the country in 2017, the visit synchronized with border intrusion on the Chinese side. When the matter was brought to Xi's attention, he feigned ignorance and said would look into it when he returned to Beijing. The recent border confrontation has led India to increase its defence procurements and an arms race in conventional weapons in the midst of the covid-19. Since both the countries are committed to nuclear no first use, the border conflict is unlikely to lead to nuclear escalation.

China has been particularly sensitive to criticism of its handling of the corona virus, visits of Indian leaders and functionaries to Arunachal Pradesh and attempts to reach out to the Dalai Lama in spite of the fact that he had renounced claims to self-determination and expressed willingness to accept the concept of Tibet as an autonomous region. One explanation for China's aggression in the midst of the pandemic is the domestic situation in the country,

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especially the challenges to the present leadership of the communist party. Such troubles are sought to be displaced by the regime by creating border conflicts and arouse nationalistic passions. While economic sanctions are welcome, let us not whip up nationalism on our side as well, which can have a backlash on the Chinese people, which may be what the regime wants. We need to make a distinction between the government and the Chinese people.

Trust is the basis of building relations with foreign countries. That China cannot be trusted is clear from the unpredictable nature of her behavior. China's creeping occupation of territory of neighbouring countries, often called salami slicing, and 'wolf warrior diplomacy' of assertive defence of Chinese interests by the country's diplomats betray a strong trust deficit. Nonetheless, India should continue talks when there is an opportunity. As things stand, Russia seems to provide the venue for such talks since such talks cannot be carried out in either China or India. Since the Chinese seem to want India to meet mid-way and India in turn insists on withdrawal of Chinese troops to pre-conflict positions, there is unlikely to be any progress in direct negotiations. In such situations, the role of third parties can be of help, although India has consistently opposed mediation.

This combined issue of the journal has four full-length articles, three shorter ones in the notes and comments section, a book review and an obituary of Professor Ramashray Roy, one of the mainstays of the editorial advisory board of *Gandhi Marg*. His passing is an irreparable loss for the editors and valuable readers of *Gandhi Marg*. The first article by Chandrakala Padia looks at the position of the individual in Gandhi's philosophy. The second article by Jos Chathukulam, Manasi Joseph and Rekha V examines the report of the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) from a Gandhian perspective. The third article by Nisha Velappan Nair looks at social solidarity economy and its similarities and differences with Gandhian economic ideas. The final article by Jose R looks at community policing and homicide cases in Kerala. It is hoped that this array of papers and the shorter contributions will enthuse our readers.

**JOHN S MOOLAKKATTU**  
Editor



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# Gandhi's View of the Individual

*Chandrakala Padia*

## ABSTRACT

*The present paper entitled, 'Gandhi's View of The Individual', attempts to explain how Gandhi's conception of the individual is both empirical and fairly transcendental. His unremitting reference to authentic human experience gives to his view on individual a coherence which is closer to the unity of life well lived rather than to that of a theoretically worked out system. What gives pre-eminence to Man in the animal world is his ability to tread the path of morality and religion, which lies in self-control. 'The scaling of the Himalayas can at best give us but a temporary thrill'; 'but the joy of self-control never wanes, and even grows more and more'. This linkage is indeed the evidence of his lifelong practice of Truth and Ahimsa, which is also warranted by the very basic way he looks at the individual, who "is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone? A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man".*

**Key words:** Individual, Truth, Ahimsa, Asvada, Talisman

GANDHI'S EMPHASIS ON Truth and Ahimsa is widely known. But it is not so commonly realized that it is all along related to such a conception of the human individual as is by no means esoteric, though it surely does not ignore our spiritual interests. The view is of course not wholly original. Gandhi himself takes pains to remind us that his life and thought are both deeply rooted in hoary Indian traditions. Truth and Ahimsa, as he says, are indeed 'old as the hills'<sup>1</sup>. Yet where their practice is earnest, self-critical and sustained, even the oldest principles acquire some new meanings in the context of challenges that life poses freely. So, to be fair to both the old and the new, we may focus on the latter, without quite skipping the former, as we set out to formulate Gandhi's view of the individual.

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Perhaps the most striking feature of this view is its comprehensiveness. It is both empirical and transcendental. He pays as much attention to the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of our being as to its involvement in the give-and-take of everyday life. It is just as noteworthy that where he looks at man from the transcendental or deeply spiritual point of view, he takes care to speak all along *in the context of concrete human experience*, be it his own or that of the saints and sages as embodied in the basic scriptures of India *and* in the devotional compositions (*bhajans*) of our saint-poets. In other words, his writing here is nowhere merely speculative. This unremitting reference to authentic human experience gives to his views on the individual a coherence which is closer to the unity of a life well lived than to that of a theoretically worked out system.

Consider, first, his views on the physical being of an individual. He admits that the inner content of an individual's body is unclean. But, on the other hand, he is also alive to the truth that it may as well be regarded as 'the temple of the spirit'<sup>2</sup>. The point is that, as the very basis of all activity, our psycho-physical structure is an excellent *and the only* vehicle for the realization of man's ultimate goal, namely, *moksa* or spiritual emancipation. Incidentally, this is also a well-known emphasis of the Yogic system of physical and psycho-ethical discipline. It is noteworthy, however, that in subscribing to this emphasis, Gandhi has his eye almost wholly on the regulation of the native psychological propensities which determine our everyday behavior; and that he is not himself involved in, though he surely does not decry, the management of vital forces (*prana-s*) and the practice of bodily postures (or *âsanas*) to which the Yoga system attaches very great value<sup>3</sup>.

It is important also to see how Gandhi's emphasis on the physical and moral well-being of the individual is related to his commitment to the overruling principles of Truth and Ahimsa. In his view, what gives pre-eminence to Man in the animal world is his ability to tread the path of morality and religion. The basics of this way, which are accepted, if not practiced, by almost everyone are enshrined in such simple precepts as: 'Do not inflict (avoidable) injury on others' and 'Speak the truth'. A very popular, ancient epic of India, Ramayana, declares that no religious precept is superior to the one which commands us do good to others; and *Satyanârâyana ki kathâ*—that is, a devout way of celebrating the glory truth-speaking narratively – is occasionally organized even today in quite a few traditional Indian homes. So the two principles on which Gandhi's whole life and thought are based are no innovation of his; and he is not trying to be modest, but only speaking the truth when he says that Truth and Ahimsa are

very old principles of conduct. Nor does he add anything to the Indian tradition when he insists that an individual cannot develop his character without the practice of vows<sup>4</sup>, though, as we shall presently see, he does make sensible additions to their number. But what is new, and can be of help to every individual, is the way he reflects on the traditional vows; highlights their value and inter-relations in the good life; and gives his own personal suggestions with regard to them - all from the viewpoint of their practicability in daily life.

Thus, he argues, how can one practice *ahimsâ* as a principle—or serve others habitually—unless one kept physically fit? And is it not every individual's obvious duty to keep a gift from God in proper condition? Be it noted that Gandhi here seems to go a step further than the wisdom immortalized by the first *mantra* of the *Îshopanishad* which he himself eulogizes as the quintessential expression of the Hindu religious spirit: "All this that we see in this great universe is pervaded by God...Renounce it *and* enjoy it. Do not covet anybody's wealth or possession"<sup>5</sup>.

The thought that everything is *permeate with* God is obviously not identical with the view that the human body is a *gift from* Him; and it is significant that Gandhi not only subscribes to both, but emphasizes the latter:

The body is not mine, it is a trust from God. As a faithful steward, I have to preserve it so as to get the best out of it for the service of His creation... Our body is to be cherished or cast away according to His will. This is not a matter for complaint or even pity; on the contrary, it is a natural and even a pleasant and desirable state... [But what is needed to see this] is the alchemy of detachment rooted in surrender to the will of God.<sup>6</sup>

What is said here relates to every individual; and is meant to free us all from deathbed agony or repentance. But what relates to our present purpose is the emphasis Gandhi generally puts on the relation of bodily health to *ahimsa* as a running determinant of conduct.

What the individual, however, needs is guidance in respect of the actual practice of the principles he is required to act upon. How, for instance, is he to take care of his body in such wise that his progress on the path of moral goodness may also be helped? On Gandhi's behalf we may answer the question as follows, strictly in the light of his own views.

A common cause of ill health is frequent overeating induced by one's excessive liking for delicacies. One has therefore to take the vow of *asvâda*, which means the sober resolution to refrain from getting attached to gastronomic pleasures. In saying so, however, we make

an addition to traditional Hindu ethics; for, as Gandhi rightly points out, as an independent *vrata*, *asvâda* 'does not figure among the observances of time-honoured recognition'<sup>7</sup>. But, as we all know, though it may be easy to make the required resolve, it is quite difficult to put it into practice. As in many other details relating to the good life, Gandhi would like to remind us of the Gita view on the matter. Our innate cravings for objects of sense-indulgence—which we inherit from our previous births—do not admit of easy control. But in respect of control of the palate, "A common kitchen...is very helpful...[Its] authorities... will not pamper us, they will cook only such food as helps us to keep the body a fit instrument for us [instead of catering to our individual fancies]."<sup>8</sup>

The suggestion is based on Gandhi's own experience, and does not seem to have any precedent in traditional Indian thought. What is more, in respect of the tendency to overeat, Gandhi bears in mind not only the individual's penchant for delicacies, but even his susceptibility to excitement on special occasions. We tend to overeat also when we feel happy and *excited* after the successful completion of a difficult task. So Gandhi advises us to let the excitement pass off before we sit down to eat. In fine, it would be quite wrong to believe that Gandhi's conception of the individual is merely spiritual.

At the same time, whatever we have said so far about Gandhi's views on the individual's bodily health is not unrelated to our general happiness and to our ethical and spiritual welfare. Control over the palate is, for Gandhi, an essential pre-condition of the individual's successful practice of *brahmacharya*<sup>9</sup> (sexual temperance), which is itself an important prerequisite for God-realization. The individual, he believes, is a unity not only because the different bodily organs conjoin to keep one alive, but in respect of one's concern with the good life. Thus, if restraint is directed only at sex and the other senses are allowed free indulgence, the practice of *brahmacharya* is not likely to succeed<sup>10</sup>.

Further, not only the senses as subjected to discipline, even the different vows are inter-related in practice, if not in abstract understanding. Thus, to turn again to *asvâda*, if we agree (with Gandhi) that its practice requires us 'to cultivate the feeling that the food we eat is to sustain the body, never to satisfy the palate'<sup>11</sup>, it becomes incumbent on everyone to keep a *truthful* eye on one's own digestive powers and present appetite. To eat more than what one needs - may be unknowingly, or out of subservience to good taste—is at once to be untruthful. What is more, the practice of *asvâda* becomes a little easier if, in the course of his actual endeavour, the individual bears two other *truths* in mind, one about his own fallibility as a human being, and the other about God's being the source of all blessings,

which include His grace *without which full success in the practice of a vow cannot be achieved*. Early, occasional lapses into overeating need not discourage us. The struggling individual has to remember the truths that “we humble seekers can but put forth a slow but steady effort...[;that, if it is coupled with faith our effort] is sure to win divine grace for us in God’s good time,...[and that] all artificial tastes will then disappear with the realization of the Highest”<sup>12</sup>.

The nexus of *asvâda* with truthfulness should now be clear. Its relation with *ahimsa* is even more obvious for Gandhi because, in his view, good health is needed essentially for lifelong service of others. What, however, still needs some comment is the closing complex of words in the extract just cited. The word *artificial* is here quite significant. What is artificial is not genuine or true; and the culmination of one’s effort in the practice of *asvâda* at once exposes, to the practicing individual, the spuriousness of gastronomic pleasures because they cannot provide the *abiding and uplifting* satisfaction which issues from the ‘taste’ of succeeding in any effort because of the (felt) assistance of His grace. The dictum that truth is that which abides holds as much of our feelings and sentiments as in respect of being and existence; and the riches *of the spirit* stand for a feeling of fullness, freedom and steadfastness which is not only blissful, but imperturbable in the case of a *sthitprajna* or the ideal man.

Anyway, what is desirable for every individual is a watchful and self-critical regulation of the entire life of sense; and, what is more, we may all remember that, far from being a source of lasting annoyance, such general restraint is a source of abiding, even growing happiness. The following remark of Gandhi, made well before the conquest of Mount Everest by Hillary and Tensing, may here be cited with advantage: “The scaling of the Himalayas can at best give us but a temporary thrill; but the joy of self-control never wanes, and even grows more and more”<sup>13</sup>.

Indeed, every step in self-mastery is at once some agreeable feeling too; and should an individual decide to scale ever greater heights of righteousness, the happy feeling would surely steady him in the practice of that crucifixion of the flesh which is demanded by God-realization or by a long fast undertaken by way of voluntary self-suffering for the redress of individual foibles or social malpractices.

But the two kinds of ills, individual and social, are hardly separable; and Gandhi’s life and thought both alike highlight the truth that the greater an individual’s commitment to social good the more likely is he to be good and happy himself<sup>14</sup>. This linkage is indeed the evidence of his own lifelong practice of Truth and Ahimsa. But it is also warranted by the very basic way in which he looks at the

individual.

Is an individual essentially an absolutely independent entity? Gandhi would answer this question at once in the negative; and we say so on the basis of his following categorical utterance: "I believe in *advaita*...in the essential unity of man... Therefore, ...if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him"<sup>15</sup>.

But, we may note, the implicitness here is one of faith, not that of a reasoned conclusion. It is obviously impossible to take into account each and every living creature and to show unmistakably how they are all *interlinked*, and not merely *similar* in some vital respects. Yet Gandhi's view here is not quite unsupported by reason; and it is surely some argument to suggest, as he does, that (at least) we, human beings, may be taken to be one because we are all 'tarred with the same brush' – that is, because we share some common basic defects. Gandhi does not here speak of common talents or capacities, but only of the limitations that are common to us all, if in varying measure. It is easy to see, however, that even such arguing points only to the *similarity*, and not to the *oneness* of all human beings. Is there no way, then, to argue for the oneness of (at least) all *human* beings? Sure, there is, Gandhi would promptly rejoin; it is reflection on what wholly self-effacing love can achieve or discover. *Ahimsa* or non-violence is (for Gandhi) the only way to realize—and not merely to talk about—the essential unity of our being. It is also (in his view) the basic means to Man's abiding happiness and moral progress, and to eventual God-realization. But then, we must see what *Ahimsa* really is; for, as *non-violence* it seems only to mean not-hurting others, and a purely negative attitude may well be met by mere inaction, and so cannot serve as a positive, regulative principle of conduct.

Now, the basic need here is to think of *ahimsa* not as merely a meaningful word, but as a principle operating in actual life and as determining one's everyday dealings. The moment we do it, its negative character is seen to be illusory. For even if one decides only to refrain from hurting others, it will become incumbent on him to so regulate his reactions and attitudes that, whatever be the provocation from those he has to deal with, he may not become angry, for in the *majority* of cases violence issues from angry feeling. We take care to provide for some exceptions here, for we do not (as a rule) inflict physical hurt on our children even when they make us angry by their misdemeanor. The restraint, in such cases, is possible only because of the (pre-existing) love that binds us with our progeny. Such a bond cannot, of course, be readily established with one and all; but one can at least try to be patient with those who provoke us. Now, it is precisely this exercise which is made a little easy by the thought that we all

have some common limitations; and that, because of the inbuilt tendencies in us all to feel unduly self-important on occasions or to be acquisitive generally, the others who do us wrong, because of such natural weaknesses, may not be taken to be singularly vicious. The ancient Indian adage that *kâma* (desire, specially carnal) *krodh* (anger), *mad* (conceit), *lobh* (greed), and *moha* (injudicious attachment) are our principal enemies relates to the whole of mankind; and remembrance of the verifiable *truth* that we are all subject to some common improper tendencies facilitates—though it does not quite ensure—the due practice of *ahimsa*. This would probably be a distinct argument of Gandhi to explain why Patanjali puts Truth at the head of his list of *yamas* or the first five basic observances. Be that as it may, this is undeniable that if, forgetting our own limitations, we become impatient with others' weaknesses, the likelihood of our getting angry—and so of growing violent—with them, will surely increase. This is precisely what Gandhi means by saying that even undue impatience is *himsa* (or violence)<sup>16</sup>. Here he may not be accused of confusing two distinct concepts, impatience and violence. We should rather be guided by the thought that, in so far as he is interested essentially in the *practice* of *ahimsa* rather than in merely understanding what the *word* means, Gandhi looks on impatience as quite as serious and rejectable a wrong as—though not quite identical with actual violence, *because it at once makes us susceptible to the latter*.

However, we have yet to explain in a simple way why Gandhi believes that if the individual wishes to realize the ultimate Truth, which is (in his view) God, the only way open to him is that of *Ahimsa*. The start may be made by taking a wider look at the points we have already made and at the concepts they involve, that is, the following: Truth—of the fundamental oneness of all (human) life, and of our being subject to some common shortcomings; and *Ahimsa*, and its practice as necessary means to attainment of *Truth*, Gandhi does not take the word, *Truth*, in an esoteric sense alone. If he regards it as *rattan chintâmani*—that is, as a jewel which helps the fulfillment of every righteous desire—he does so only because the practice of truth make for the all-round improvement of the individual as a moral being. And it is easy to see how Truth is really of such help. Even if it be taken as a quality of everyday speech, as in the precept: 'speak the truth', the consequences of its practice can be very far-reaching. For if we resolve to speak the truth generally, we will have to avoid those situations which almost compel us to tell lies; and in so far as such occasions are precisely those when we do a wrong and are tempted to cover it up by lying, the single resolution to hold on to truth-speaking can serve as a bulwark against all wrong-doing and so ensure

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positive growth in goodness.

The same simple conception of truth also gives full liberty of thought and speech to an atheist, without in any way alienating him from God's authority and providence. Gandhi argues that just as the law that rules the land does not cease to operate because of a villager's unawareness of it, God's sovereign authority is not set to naught by the atheist's disbelief<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, the major sources of God's benevolence that nourish us—say, the sun and the air that we breathe—do not fail to operate in the case of those who do not believe in God<sup>18</sup>. The subtle point to note here, however, is that an atheist may even be (said to be) quite in tune with God's essential nature, if quite unwittingly. For, if he voices his disbelief in God *sincerely*, the atheist would be truthful and so close to God—because God is Truth. This is, in our view, what Gandhi really means when he speaks thus: “that which impels man to do the right is God... He is [even] the denial of the atheist”<sup>19</sup>.

The way we have here tried to relate even an atheist to God (as Truth) is supported more clearly by Gandhi's own following words:

Bradlaugh, whose atheism is well-known, always insisted on proclaiming his innermost convictions...He delighted in it and said that truth is its own reward. Not that he was quite insensible to the joy resulting from the observance of truth. This joy, however, is not at all worldly, but springs out of communion with the divine. That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot and does not live without religion<sup>20</sup>.

But how is an average individual to understand and accept the view that God is Truth? Gandhi would open his answer to this question by referring to the word *Satya*, which is a Sanskrit equivalent of Truth. It literally means: That which is. So the proposition: ‘God is Truth’ may be taken to signify ‘He alone [really] is’. But this is surely likely to bewilder the common man. Is not the world with its abounding content of things, people and happenings, also clearly there? Gandhi would rejoin: sure, it appears to be there, but things often seem to be what they are really not<sup>21</sup>and, what is more, they are not immune to decay. God, on the other hand, is not Himself the appearance of anything. This appears to be Gandhi's meaning when he speaks of God as the ‘purest essence’<sup>22</sup>. No superior reality may be said to transcend God; no experience is so deeply satisfying as a living communion with God; and He is, of course, the everlasting Reality. Gandhi would add that at least the second of these truths can be verified by every individual, in his (or her) own individual experience,

for He never fails to help in critical situations, provided one looks upon Him *in humility and trust*. Soulful prayer is the individual's most effective shield against the 'slings and arrows of misfortune'. Indeed, the realization that God 'gives the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire'<sup>23</sup> is no monopoly of sages and saints. It is achievable by the lowliest of individuals; one has only to meet the requirement of truthfulness in prayer. But it is important to see the full meaning of this requisite. Too long for relief is natural for anyone who is suffering; such *longing* wells up from the heart, and so it cannot but be true or sincere. But focusing the mind straightaway *on God* is not so easy; it calls for long prior practice and the watchful observance of quite a few disciplines. Yet even the meanest of individuals can at least confess to himself, as he prays, that he is not able to fix or rest his mind on God and this *truthful* confession of a clear inability would at once make his struggling prayer acceptable to the God of *Truth*. Truth is as much a requirement of inner attitudes as of thought and speech; and the individual who wishes to practice the vow of Truth has to care for things far more subtle than those that meet the eye. This is why Gandhi often resorts to spells of intense heart-searching; and this may also be regarded as some hint for the common man to realize that objects of sense are not the only loci of value. The concept of the supersensible is not as flimsy as it seems to be.

But in talking of truth, prayer, and God, have we quite moved away from our initial concern with *ahimsâ* and the basic oneness of all (human) life? Not really, and to see this we have only to think about *ahimsâ* a little more deeply than we have so far done, and all along in the context of individual life.

To begin anew from the apparently negative meaning of *ahimsâ*, how can one actually keep off *himsâ* or the very thought of harming others? The tendency to be violent or to hit back is inherent in us all. In a provocative situation we do not have to try to be angry; we become so automatically. What needs effort is rather the avoidance of such a reaction. Even patience and resort to the thought of our common weaknesses may not help where passions run high and sanity is clouded over with dogmatic, narrow and vested interests and with the coloured reasoning issuing therefrom. Here one has to try, as much as one can, to keep to the path of love and tolerance. This indeed is why *ahimsâ* is said to be a *vrata* or vow

Gandhi is quite alive to the difficulty of keeping to a vow faithfully. In his own words, he is 'a *practical* idealist'<sup>24</sup>. 'After taking a vow', he says, "one should not start soaring in the sky but remain on the earth... We are, imperfect"<sup>25</sup>; and so are always liable to falter in the practice of a vow. On the other hand, however human nature is not quite



without some built-in support for the cultivation of love and so for the active practice of *ahimsâ*. Hardly any individual is utterly incapable of experiencing a natural melting of the heart at the immediate *sight* of suffering; and though the ability to envisage the misery of the poor and the down-trodden as clearly as if it were actually before us has to be expressly cultivated, our inborn ability to feel for those who need relief *visibly* is surely of help in taking to a life of love and service. It is in this context noteworthy—because we have not so far seen it emphasized elsewhere—that Gandhi here pleads for a resort to visual imagination, if not quite openly. He himself seems to do this when he expresses and reiterates his commitment to the path of service by declaring that he is not going to rest until he has wiped ‘*every tear from every eye*’, and as an easy way to keep our everyday conduct inclined to the path of *ahimsâ* or service, he recommends a similar use of imagination to every individual. See, here, his following words:

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. *Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen*, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? In other words, will it lead to *swarâj* for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubt and yourself melting away<sup>26</sup>.

It is important to look at these words very closely:

First, it is clear that they are addressed to *every* individual. We *all* feel undecided, at times, as to the right course of action. Nor is it uncommon to worry too much about our own interests. Today, in fact, such excessive self-concern is a frequent cause of tension and apprehensiveness. But all such inhibitions are quite likely to disappear if, at the point of acting, the image of a woebegone face bestirs a little compassion in our hearts; and we may be directly impelled to choose a course of action which is utterly selfless.

Second, it is noteworthy that *the first step* in the “talisman’s” working—as distinguished from its leading to *ahimsa* as a *running determinant* of conduct—does not call for the prior observance of any such discipline as may be open only to those who are blessed with a strong will or with a highly refined moral sense. Gandhi’s formula requires us to avail of our native psychological equipment<sup>27</sup>. Yet, if we do as it wants us to, we at once get set on the path of *ahimsa*. This may only be the thin end of the wedge; but even at this early stage in the practice of *ahimsa*, the experience is a positive breath of bliss, a felt expansion of the self in utterly outgoing love. It is admittedly difficult

to *prove* that we are all one. But, just as definitely, the experience we speak of dissipates the seeming hard otherness of the other, if only for a while; one feels liberated from obsession with self, and what is directly felt does not need any further proof.

Thirdly, Gandhi's formulation of the 'talisman' is a clear index of how he looks at the individual as an intense, but living unity of the physical and the spiritual. Even if we do the very minimum for the poorest of us—say, by providing them simply the basic amenities of life—they may well be enabled to think how they can make the most of their lives, and so to secure a measure of *swarâj* in the sense of self-determination. Further, when they are thus relieved from the everyday worry of meeting their basic needs of life, they may even be able to think of a nobler kind of living, that is, of ethico-religious progress. As things stand at present, the millions of India who are perforce hungry for food—and surely not fasting by choice—are also starving spiritually. They languish in spirit *because of* physical starvation.

The selfsame emphasis on the view that an individual is an intimate oneness of body and soul is reflected in Gandhi's opposition to the curse of *untouchability*, which has plagued Hindu society for long:

We [the Hindus] have endeavoured to disfigure God's mightiest creation, namely, man. *The soul of man has a beauty never to be surpassed by any ravishing beauty...*[in the region of sense]. But the so-called....high class Hindus arrogated to themselves the right of suppressing a portion of Hindu humanity...[We have] left no stone unturned to suppress....the soul of man by putting thousands outside the pale of society<sup>28</sup>.

Gandhi never uses words without really meaning what they signify; and so it would be doing the needful if we could somehow determine what he means by the surpassing beauty of 'the soul of man.' So far as we know, he does not himself face and answer the question. But it seems to us that a fairly satisfactory answer can be given (on his behalf) by building upon some of his own basic views. Consider, for example, the following:

- a. "The soul's natural progress is towards selflessness and purity"<sup>29</sup>.
- b. "Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man"<sup>30</sup>.
- c. "Physical, mental and spiritual purity is essential....for [the] harmonious working of man's mind, body, and soul"<sup>31</sup>.

Let us now reflect on these three extracts, along with the one cited a little earlier (A), which contains the thought we are trying to clarify.

The soul of man can be seen in two ways: first, that it *has* a beauty which is unsurpassable by any ravishing beauty; and second, that the soul of man has *been suppressed* in the case of thousands of Hindus. Taking the two together, we may say that the beauty in question is not manifest immediately—because the soul can be kept suppressed—but only when it is allowed to have its own way. Now, the way of ‘the soul’s natural progress’ is that of increasing selflessness [or service] and purity. Purity, here, is not mere cleanliness; Gandhi links it purposely with selflessness. It is therefore to be taken also as freedom from all those factors which corrupt the mind, inflate the ego, make us self-centred, and so alienate us from our fellow-beings. It is not for nothing that the traditional ethico-religious literature of India warns us repeatedly to beware ‘the five principal enemies of mankind’. It is indeed only by means of unremitting watchfulness in respect of our everyday conduct and attitudes that not only ‘the gross animal’ body, but even the heart and the intellect can be purified. And it is only this all round purity which makes it possible for all the powers of an individual’s being to work in harmony. But, we may note, this harmony is not a matter of giving equal importance to everything that makes us what we are. Gandhi’s emphasis is here quite clear: “It is *not* man’s duty to develop *all* his functions to perfection; his duty is to develop all his *God-ward* faculties [alone] to perfection and to suppress completely those of a contrary tendency”<sup>32</sup>.

Upon this view, the modern practice of devoting one’s whole life to the exclusive pursuit of games and sports or to innovative work in the field of dressmaking is a clear and improper indifference to the truth that

Man’s ultimate aim is the realization of God....[;] that all his activities....have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God....[; and that] the immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation....<sup>33</sup>.

In other words, the requisite integration of an individual’s inner being means that, with the express purpose of realizing his destiny as a human being, he has to carefully regulate—and not to merely ignore or suppress—all his psycho-physical impulses such wise that attainment of the crowning objective may be helped.

It should now be possible to see how it makes sense to say, as Gandhi does, that no ravishing beauty in Nature (or in the realm of sense taken generally) can surpass the (hidden) beauty of the soul. Speaking quite generally, beauty is attractiveness arising, in the main,

from a proper integration of whatever is there in the object that appears to be beautiful. A figure is beautiful essentially, though not only in so far as its various parts or limbs appear to go well with one another. In the region of art too, it is form as a dynamic interplay of elements, which is now regarded as the main source of a work's beauty or significance. Now, what Gandhi speaks of as the beauty of the soul is nothing but the purity of a 'God-ward' life achieved through a far richer regulation of details than the one involved in producing a work of art; and so it may well be regarded as partaking eminently of the essence of art. In a good music composition only two basic elements dovetail, namely, *swara* and *laya* (or aesthetic pace); and musicianship results from a mastery of just these two factors with their cognates<sup>34</sup>. Attainment of purity, on the other hand, calls for a regulation of an individual's whole life, right from what and how he eats, and how he relaxes—in meaningless, but rejuvenescent prattle with tiny tots or in a casino—to how he reacts not only to the pressures of personal life but to the various ills that plague society. Here, Gandhi's own following words may be cited with advantage:

There is a place for art in life...[But] people who claim to pursue 'art for art's sake' are unable to make good their claim. [The fact is that if art] becomes an end in itself, it enslaves and degrades humanity... We have somehow accustomed ourselves to the belief that art is independent of the purity of private life...Nothing could be more untrue. As I am nearing the end of my earthly life, I can say that purity is the highest and truest art. The art [say,] of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved very rarely....There is an art which kills and an art gives life<sup>35</sup>.

But these remarks are not the only challenge of Gandhi to the prevalent view of art's tenuous relation to morality. He would also like us to reflect on a key question. What exactly is an individual's most essential need—happiness or inner peace? It would here be wrong to point to the former; and we say so with some reason. Happiness is *not always* congenial to right thinking and decision; for, as on festive occasions, one may well feel happy and *excited*. Serenity or peace, on the other hand, necessarily admits of cool reflection and so does not easily allow one to choose wrong ends or means. Imperturbable peace is finally attained only by leading a godward life. 'Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God'<sup>36</sup>. The only means to become so is the path of morality. So whatever is indifferent to the norms of morality—be it the seductive, easy-to-see-God recipe of a God man of today or the widely acclaimed, but permissive creation

of an artist—must be rejected as inimical to the individual's ultimate interests. As for those who create works by way of extolling the *ravishing* beauty of a particular female figure<sup>37</sup>, our answer (on behalf of Gandhi) would be that any beauty, which ravishes the onlooker, *overwhelms* him with delight, upsets his balance of mind and so may well stir up impulses, which are not quite laudable.

But, tempting though it surely is to extol it as Gandhi does, the beauty of spirit is clearly not achievable, as he himself would insist, except through the meticulous practice of *ahimsâ*. His *talisman* sure makes sense as a panacea for the individual's habitual indifference (at least in the big cities of India today) to social needs. However, mere absence of indifference to others' suffering is not the same thing as the positive and lifelong commitment to social causes demanded by the *vrata* of *ahimsâ*; and some skeptical questions yet remain to be discussed:

- a. What exactly is an individual wedded to *ahimsa* expected to do? Is he to follow the way of the average social worker who gives some relief to the needy in a merely general way, say, by distributing two blankets in winter to every family living in a particular colony of *jhuggi*-dwellers<sup>38</sup>?
- b. And is the psychological leaven provided by the imagined face of a very poor man enough to change the moral torpor of an individual into genuine concern for his fellow-beings, and to put him steadfastly on the path of *ahimsâ*?

Gandhi's answer to both these questions would turn, importantly, upon his regard for the individual's needs, capacities, and destiny. True, it is not possible to help *large* sections of society by proceeding to determine and meet the specific needs of *every* single individual. But, at the same time, whereas it is necessary to address such large questions as provision of cheap education and clean public toilets for people living in slums, it is also imperative to actively keep in touch with them, and to even dwell and occasionally dine with them, so as to get a direct feel of the many little ways in which they suffer as individuals with some basic, daily needs. No fellow *feeling* flows from the mere concepts of poverty and suffering; and an impersonal working of public welfare schemes lacks those quiet expressions of love, such as a kindly look or a warm handshake, which not only lighten the physical strain of helping others, but enable them to accept help without any felt loss of dignity. And to think of the suffering merely in terms of number is to incur the risk of becoming less sensitive than is necessary. This indeed is why when his law-keeping colleagues assure him, complacently, that only a *few* people have been killed in a *very big*

riot, Gandhi straightaway asks the reporters to try to comfort the bereaved families, individually, with the same assurance!

It is not merely possible but necessary for a votary of *ahimsâ* to look at society as a group of individual centres of experience, and not as mere abstract units; and it is this which can enable him to work for a direct, if not quite perfect realization of the truth that we are all one. But, be it noted, this truth—of the unity of being—is *elicited as a crowning experience of cordiality*. The way to this experience is purification of self by intentional abstinence, prayer, and selfless love. It is not an easy discipline. But its fruition quite makes up for the rigour; it runs over ill will and antagonism, if not for good.

The point may be brought out by taking a close look at the context and inner logic of a typical *satyâgrahic* fast of Gandhi, that is, a fast which is related to truth in more ways than one, as we shall presently see. The context, here, is a situation of wanton communal violence. Gandhi sees it clearly that the fighting is quite unwarranted and ruinous. But, as a votary of *ahimsa*, he just cannot condemn the rioters angrily. Nor does he expect any persuasion or counsel to work in the situation; for where passions run high, same thinking is just out of the question. Therefore Gandhi is left with just one choice. He must somehow move the hearts of the rioters. For whatever moves the heart is dwelt upon for a while; and the mind is given a breather for some patient thinking, and so also a chance to get at the *truth* of the situation beneath the tumult of passion. But what can *truly* move the rioters' heart and prompt some *genuine* heart-searching is only the definite awareness that a man who loves them truly is suffering for *their* sake, and quite without any self-interest. So Gandhi undertakes a fast. It's being 'unto death', along with Gandhi's own known adherence to truth in all that he says or does, opens up the truth and gravity of the situation to the rioters. They see it clearly that he is dead earnest about continuing the fast; and that he loves them truly, for there is no better index of the *truth* of a love than readiness to suffer for those whom one professes to love. Further, the fast is a protracted abstention from food; and though his spirit retains its wonted buoyancy, Gandhi's physical suffering is obvious. The inner composure, we may note, arises from his faith in two basic *truths*: first, that God never deserts of man who struggles for a good cause prayerfully, and so quite without rancor; and second, that in so far as we are all essentially one,

the hardest heart (must melt) and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the sun of suffering without anger and without malice....[because whereas] the appeal of reason is more to the head [which can easily put

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forth specious arguments] the penetration of the heart comes from suffering...[which] opens up the inner understanding in man<sup>39</sup>.

Now it is important to visualize what Gandhi could possibly mean by the opening-up of 'inner understanding'. It is, we believe, a sudden and overpowering, yet redemptive influx, so to say, of the wholeness of truth (as fact) into the rioters' awareness. When the continuance of the fast becomes ominous, they are reminded anew of the laudable motive of the fast; and the need for some urgent, remedial action is heightened by what they see quite clearly and a little apprehensively, namely, Gandhi's withering physical frame. So, what his suffering generates in the rioters is not mere compassion, but a powerful impulse to probe for what *they* all have done to let violence begin and proliferate; and they are prompted to act in accordance with their resurrected sense of right. This is what Gandhi means by the opening-up of inner understanding; and as it comes about, the rioters begin to retrace their steps, and peace is eventually restored. Should one wonder at this happy play of inter subjectivity, our answer would be that it is but the elicitation of a truth. No individual is inexorably insular; and the realization that, at the deepest level, we are all one is not only the perfection of *ahimsa* at work, but attainment of our spiritual destiny.

### Notes and References

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2. Shriman Narayan, (General Editor), *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, Vol. IV., 1997 (First Published in 1868, here cited from the addition 1997.), p. 402). From now on, these *Works* will be referred to simply as SW.(N) 'N' is here meant to indicate that the 1997 edition of these *Works* is new, as distinguished from their old edition of 1968, also edited by by Shriman Narayan. Volumes of *this old edition* have been referred to in these Notes as SW (O).
3. If only incidentally, Gandhi does admit that *asanas* are also useful. SW. (N), Vol. IV, p. 436.
4. According to Gandhi, the purpose of a vow is to imbue one's character with 'ballast and firmness'. *In search of the Supreme*, Vol. II.p.6.
5. V.B. Kher (ed.), *In Search of the Supreme-Mahatma Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, Vol. III), 1962, p. 105. Italics added. Here Gandhi agrees that the second sentence can also be translated thus: "Enjoy what He gives you".
6. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase*, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Trust, 1958), p. 231.

7. SW.(O), Vol. IV, p. 223.
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11. M.K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma*, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), p. 140.
12. SW.(O), Vol. IV, p.225.
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23. *Ibid*, pp.22-23.
24. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Hereafter, referred to as CW.), (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, Vol.56), p. 491.
25. *Ibid*, p. 67.
26. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase*, (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1956 [1958]), p. 65.
27. See, here, the following words of Gandhi: "I take from human nature what it yields, and go my way" CW. Vol. 56, p. 401.
28. *Ibid*, p. 490.
29. *The Gita according to Gandhi*, (translated by Mahadevi Desai), (Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), p. 202.
30. *Harijan*, 8.5.37, p. 104.
31. *The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 208.
32. *Young India*, 24.6.1926; p. 226.
33. *Harijan*, 29.8.1936; p. 226.
34. Only *swara* (the musical note) and *laya* (or aesthetic pace) are common to every form of Hindustani classical music. *Alapa* of the *dhruvapad*-singer employs neither language nor beat-measured rhythm.
35. SW. (O), Vol. VI, pp. 290-93.
36. *The Gita According to Gandhi*, pp. 128-29.
37. The reference here is to M.F. Hussain's paintings on Madhuri Dixit.
38. A *jhuggi* is a makeshift hut used as a dwelling by the very poor.



39. N.K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, (Ahemdabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1948), p. 158.

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# Navigating the Report of the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) from a Gandhian Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

*In this article an attempt has been made to navigate the report of the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey 2016–18 from a Gandhian perspective. The major findings of the survey are worrisome developments in respect of many dimensions of nutritional status in the country. Concerted efforts have to be made by various stakeholders in the country as a whole and specific to regions /states to fight malnutrition and its consequences. Gandhi's tenets of nutrition are positive reactions on a query on 'how the poor people can avail healthy food and nutritious diet'. Gandhi tried to find the cheapest substitute nutritious diet at local level. Since the severity of malnutrition varies from region to region and district to district, a paradigm shift to decentralized health practices, food habits, diet and dietary recommendations that reckon with these regional variations is called for. The paper argues that Gandhian perspective on diet and dietetic reform may be seen as viable and alternative strategy to address malnutrition in general and child malnutrition in particular, more so in the light of the threat posed by the Covid- 19 pandemic.*

**Key words:** Gandhi, Nutrition, Health, Children, Covid- 19

## Introduction

UNDERNUTRITION HAS BEEN considered as one of the major  
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causes limiting India's global economic potential (Copenhagen Consensus, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. As a response to this, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India along with UNICEF and Population Council have conducted a Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (hereafter, CNNS), the first ever in India, during the period of 2016–2018, covering 29 States and the report has been published in October 2019. This survey was also the largest micronutrient survey ever undertaken globally. It is comprehensive in the sense that the report has been prepared after interviewing 112,316 children and adolescents and grouping them into three i.e. pre – school children (0–4 years), school – age children (5–9 years), and adolescents (10–19 years)<sup>2</sup>. The CNNS has covered 38,060 pre – schoolers, 38,355 school – age children and 35,830 adolescents in rural and urban areas across all States in India<sup>3</sup>.

The report analyses the data based on the rural and urban areas, food habits, literacy level of mothers, religion and income of the families. Across the groups, 75 per cent of participants were from rural areas. The religion wise classification shows that 80 per cent were Hindus, 16 per cent Muslims, two per cent Christians and the remaining came from Sikh and other religions<sup>4</sup>. The location and religion wise classification of the percentage of the participants in the CNNS is proportionate to their respective share in the total population. It is found that 55 per cent children and adolescents follow a strict vegetarian diet without eggs, 36 to 40 per cent eat a non-vegetarian diet and the remaining are ovo-vegetarians who eat eggs. Child undernutrition is caused not just by lack of adequate nutritious food, but by lack of goods and services in the domain of health governance. Undernutrition has long-term and short-term consequences. Nearly half of all deaths of children under five years of age are due to poor nutrition<sup>5</sup>. Evidence from recent research suggests that undernutrition can trap children, families, communities and nations in an intergenerational cycle of poor nutrition, illness and poverty. Strong associations have been established between nutritional deficiencies and impaired brain development and subsequent reduced performance in school education and earning. All forms of undernutrition epitomize societal inequalities and serve as makers for poverty and underdevelopment. It is revealed a one cm increase in height was associated with a four per cent increase in wages for men and a six per cent increase in wages for women<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, investing in the reduction of child malnutrition is paramount for human and economic development. In recognition of the association between nutrition and economic development, the Government of India has launched three flagship programmes which have the potential to address stunting

and under nutritious related issues namely the National Nutrition Mission, National Health Mission and Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan. The government has matched the commitment by creating ambitious targets and supporting efforts with substantial budget allocations. Here, the authors have made serious attention to revisit the report of the CNNS from a Gandhian perspective. This paper is organized in to five parts. The introductory part is followed by Part II, which describes Gandhi's tenets on nutrition. Part III and VI present the CNNS results and the schemes for nutrition management in India. Part V cautions the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the nutrition crisis among children and adults. Part VI concludes with the statement that simple, affordable and good dietary practices advocated by Gandhi has all the necessary ingredients to address the malnutrition of people.

## **Part II: Gandhi's Tenets on Nutrition**

This section attempts to make an assessment of Gandhi's views on health and examines its relevance to India today in the context of the findings of the CNNS. It is attempted to navigate the report of the CNNS from a Gandhian perspective. As an experimental scientist<sup>7</sup>, Gandhi showed considerable interest on the subject of health, nutrition, and dietary recommendations. Gandhi had engaged in experiments on nutrition since his childhood. Gandhi started his dietetic experiments when he was an eighteen-year-old student and all the experiments were done on himself even at the risk of costing his life. Even when his body became very emaciated, he kept on doing small experiments.

For Gandhi, health was not a subject dependent on secondary sources. His position on health was drawn deeply and directly from his experiments with food and diet. The biggest of his experiments was on milk. First, he considered animal milk as a non-vegetarian nutrition and therefore consuming it as a form of violence. And he did not use milk for many years. But when he was seriously ill, he was forced to take milk on the recommendation of doctors. There was strong pressure from Kasturba too, and finally he started taking goat's milk. He considered it also as an experiment and when the result was positive, he had no reservation in recommending animal milk (goat's milk) for the nourishment of human beings. Bhargava and Kant have argued that, Gandhiji always had an open mind, and though inconveniently inquisitive at the beginning, he was the most enthusiastic follower of a principle once he was convinced about its soundness<sup>8</sup>. This is also seen in the case of goat milk. His desire was to find a plant substitute for milk. He also wanted the scientists of the day to address this issue. His approach to salt was the same. He was

more sensible and confident on his self-experiments with milk and salt. He knew that he would be criticized for changing positions and ideas and appearing inconsistent. Therefore, he says: "I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discussed many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject"<sup>9</sup>. This appeal to the readers is more applicable in the domain of his experiments on food and nutrition and that may be the reason for inserting the above statement of Gandhi by Kumarappa in his edited works on 'Diet and Diet Reform'<sup>10</sup>. Surprisingly, his profound experiments on the subject have not received adequate attention from the health activists and professionals. As it is already mentioned the subject of health was one to which Gandhi was intensely drawn, and his views, experiments, and findings on it are therefore of considerable academic interest for those who seek balanced and affordable nutritious diet through a non-conventional lens. His major concern was the availability of cheapest nutritious diet for the poor. Gandhi's tenets on nutrition are a positive reaction to a query on 'how the poor people can avail healthy and nutritious diet'. Gandhi tried to find the cheapest substitutes for fruits and they were peanuts, dates and bananas. It is seen that for many years he used them in his meals. His concern was to discover the most nutritious food and preparing it without losing its nutritious value considering poverty of the people and their slender resources. As a result, Gandhiji had experiments with ovens, vessels for cooking, quantity of water to be used, steaming, boiling, baking - determining what ingredients are to be used or avoided in cooking, various ways of making bread, manufacture of jams and *murabbas*<sup>11</sup> out of fruits and orange-skins which might otherwise be wasted or thrown away<sup>12</sup>, use of green leaves as salads, preparing dishes out of oilcake and soya beans, combining various items to constitute a balanced diet and making up of suitable diets for invalids and convalescents. He himself admits that "As a researcher for truth I deem it necessary to find the perfect food for a man to keep body, mind and soul in a sound condition. ....I therefore still seek information and guidance from kindred spirits"<sup>13</sup>.

As Kumarappa says, "Gandhiji's interest in food arises partly from

his concern for those around him. When he took to public life, he had a group of followers and their children living with him. He held himself responsible for their well-being. Naturally, when any of them fell ill, he had to see what could be done to restore them to health. He did not wish to use drugs if he could it, as he believed they were injurious to the human system. He was convinced that disease was due to some maladjustment in the system and that all that was necessary to overcome it was to help nature to rectify the wrong. A fruitful way of aiding nature to do this and maintaining the body in health was through proper diet. He therefore became involved in research on diet<sup>14</sup>. His concern towards the drudgery of housework by women also prompted him to disapprove the traditional method of cooking. He understood that there was no need to cook all food on fire and cooking them on fire was like destroying them. He realized that if cereals were soaked in water it would be easy for the womenfolk to cook them and also time and cost can be saved. He realized that raw water-soaked grains have to be chewed properly and can be consumed in less quantity than the cooked food and therefore it could benefit the poor in India. For Gandhiji, dietetics<sup>15</sup> is not mere notion or second hand knowledge but the products of experiments. *Ashrams*<sup>16</sup> were the real laboratories where Gandhiji repetitively carried on experiments in diet.

One may trace Gandhiji's interest in diet to Hinduism. The *Bhagavad Gita*<sup>17</sup> speaks of various psychological effects produced by different kinds of food and there is rich mine of literature, tradition and folklore in India regarding dieting for health. Kumarappa asserts that Gandhiji's interest in questions relating to diet are nothing strange and it is in line with India's ancient wisdom. It may not be a bolt from the blue if one argues that even some of the present-day detailed checklist of advisories from the World Health Organizations (WHO) to avoid communicable and non-communicable disease are actually the tenets of good health that Gandhi preached and practised a century ago. Many of his ideas may be helpful in fighting health issues ranging from malnutrition to modern disease. Nutritionists and public health experts agree with the same to an extent.

Gavaravarapu and Hemalatha in their study titled "Thought for Food: Mahatma's Views on Nutrition, Controlled and Balanced Diets" opine that "Today, beset as we are with lifestyle diseases driven by our faulty food choices and sedentary habits, 'locally grown', 'less oil and salt', 'less sugary,' 'farm fresh', 'low fat' have become much bandied words. Nutrition science extols the virtues of fresh vegetables and fruits, probiotic potential of curds or yoghurt and decries ill-effects of sugar and refined flours. The virtues of walking<sup>18</sup>, regular

exercise and good sanitary habits are all important. These were the very by-words that Gandhi lived by<sup>19</sup>. They have also noted that Gandhi followed a 'minimalistic approach to diet'. For Gandhi, food is viewed as energy and even a medicine that is required to keep one's physique healthy and appropriate for action of energy to be produced for individual action and sustain the body health. For Gandhi, excessive eating, frequent meals and immoderation of concentrated starch and sugar were unhealthy and therefore caused disorders. He advocated every food material only based on its energy and nutritious content rather than its palate value. Gandhi was more cautious on how often and how much to eat and it was one of the themes in his work on "The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism". He said, "Food should be taken as a matter of duty even as a medicine to sustain the body, never for the satisfaction of palate"<sup>20</sup>.

"We easily fall a prey to the temptation of the palate, and therefore when thing taste delicious, we do not mind taking a morsel or two more. But you can not keep health under those circumstances. Therefore, I discovered that in order to keep health, no matter what you ate, it was necessary to cut down the quantity of your food and reduce the number of meals. Becomes moderate; err on the side of less, rather than on the side of more,"<sup>21</sup>. According to Gandhi "Sieving of the flour should be avoided"<sup>22</sup>. It is likely to remove the *bhusi*<sup>23</sup> or the pericarp, which is a rich source of salts and vitamins, both of which are most valuable from the point of view of nutrition. The above understanding of Gandhi's tenets on nutrition has been applied as the framework to understand the nutrition status of India. The CNNS is being observed through the lens of Gandhi in the following section.

### **Part III: Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS)**

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the CNNS in October 2019. Considered to be India's first comprehensive micronutrient<sup>24</sup> survey ever, it shows the abysmal status of nutrition among children and adolescents in the country and its impact on their overall health. The CNNS also throws light on the shifting patterns of diet and sedentary lifestyles resulting in obesity, hypertension and other non-communicable diseases. The Survey was conducted between 2016 and 2018. Among all the three age groups, 75 per cent of the participants were from rural areas<sup>25</sup>. As part of the survey, 51,000 biological samples on children's micronutrient status were also included. Gold standard methods<sup>26</sup> were used to assess micronutrient deficiencies, anaemia and biomarkers<sup>27</sup> of non-communicable disease among children. Nutritional status and micronutrient deficiencies

among children and adolescents from birth to 19 years and information regarding the prevalence of non-communicable diseases among those aged 5-19 years are mentioned in the CNNS.

**Stunting, Wasting and Underweight among Children under Five Years of Age** Child undernutrition is understood mainly by measuring height and weight. It can also be understood from clinical manifestations and biochemical markers. Indicators based on weight, height and age are compared to international standards and are most commonly used to assess the nutritional status of children. Stunting (inadequate height for age) shows early chronic exposure to undernutrition; wasting (inadequate weight for height) is a sign of acute undernutrition; underweight (inadequate weight for age) is a composite indicator that includes elements of both stunting and wasting. According to life cycle perspective, the most critical time to meet a child's nutritional requirement is under five years of age in general<sup>28</sup> and 1000 days including the stage of pregnancy and ending with the child's second birthday in particular. Here, it is worthwhile to observe the field reflections on undernutrition by Abhay Bang<sup>29</sup> who is working among the rural community in the Gadchiroli district in the State of Maharashtra. He has two narratives to understand undernutrition in the rural context of India. Generally, pregnant women do not have enough to eat so that child's malnourishment begins in the womb itself. There is another cultural practice, which also works in favour of undernutrition among the child population. Pregnant women often ate less because of fear that a well-nourished child will create greater pangs during delivery.

### **A. Stunting**

According to WHO, there are four broad sub-forms of undernutrition: wasting, stunting, underweight and deficiencies in vitamins and minerals. Undernutrition makes children more vulnerable to disease and death. Stunting<sup>30</sup> among children under five years of age in the life cycle is a major indicator of undernutrition. The CNNS points out that 35 per cent of children in India under five years of age are stunted.

As per the latest Global Hunger Index Report 2019 (GHIR, 2019), in South Asia region, the stunting rate among children stands at 37.60 per cent and wasting rate is at 17.50 per cent. According to the GHI 2019, "India's child wasting rate is extremely high at 20.80 percent—the highest wasting rate of any country in this report for which data or estimates were available. Its child stunting rate, 37.90 percent is also very high"<sup>31</sup>. The recently released Global Nutrition Report 2020 (GNR 2020) states that globally, 149 million children under five years



of age are stunted. As per the GNR 2020, wasting affects 49.50 million children and 20.50 million newborns are underweight or having low – birth weight. The report states that Asia is home to more than half of the world’s stunted children (81.70 million) and 40.10 million children under five years of age are overweight. Regarding India, the GNR 2020 indicates that one in three children under five years of age is stunted and one in five children under five years of age is wasted<sup>32</sup>. The report also warns that due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, India along with 88 other countries are likely to miss the global nutrition targets<sup>33</sup> by 2025.

As stated earlier, 35 per cent of children under five years of age are stunted in India. As per the Global Nutrition Report 2018, roughly 46 million children among the states in India are stunted. As per the GNR 2018, India accounts for almost a third (31%) of the world’s burden for stunting. But this burden is not evenly distributed among the states because the country is so diverse spatially. Moreover, nutritional status is influenced by three broad factors: food, health and care, which are in turn affected by social, economic and political manifestations. Since the combination and relative importance of these manifestations differ from state to state, the stunting and other forms of undernutrition landscape of India needs to be analysed at state level. Moreover, capturing the ground realities of the causes of undernutrition in a particular state is critical to formulate a policy package which addresses the needs of the most vulnerable sections of the society. Since the country is so diverse, it is important to understand how and why the prevalence of stunting, varies from state to state. The CNNS state wise data on the stunting among children under five years shows that nine states are below the national average and the stunting is very high in states like Bihar (42%), Meghalaya (40.4%), Madhya Pradesh (39.5%) Gujarat (39.1%), Rajasthan (36.80%) and Uttar Pradesh (38.80%). It is followed by Jharkhand (36.2%), Chhattisgarh (35.4%) and Haryana (34.9%)<sup>34</sup>. States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are known as BIMARU states<sup>35</sup> and have a combined 37.42 per cent stunting prevalence among children under five years of age. The lowest prevalence of stunting (16-21 per cent) was found in Goa and Jammu and Kashmir (Refer Table No.1). The differences between states are explained by many factors associated with gender, education, economic status, health, hygiene, and other demographic factors. Again, the aggregate average may hide important disparities among sub national population groups such as by gender, area of residence, economic status of the household and literacy rate of mothers. There are descriptive analyses to understand spatial differences in distribution of stunting at the sub

state level. Stunting varies greatly from district to district (12.4% to 65.1%), with 239 of 604 districts having stunting levels above 40 per cent<sup>36</sup>. However, district level figures are not available with CNNS. Globally, it is seen that disparities in stunting are well documented. Over one third of the children in rural households are stunted compared to one quarter in urban households at the global level. The same trend is visible in India also. In rural households 37 per cent are stunted whereas it is less by 10 points in urban settings. Though stunting afflicts more children from the rural households than their urban counterparts in all the states except a few (Delhi, Haryana and Goa) there are wide variations among the states. The difference is very high in the states of Telangana (22.50%) and Karnataka (18.70%). Only insignificant difference is noticed in states of Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and Kerala.

Girls and boys are almost equally likely to be stunted, globally. However, in sub-Saharan Africa stunting troubles more boys than girls. As in the case of sub-Saharan Africa, stunting afflicts more boys than girls in India and the difference is insignificant - only 1.40 per cent. There are gender differences among the states. But this burden is not evenly distributed among the states and in 21 states stunting is seen more among boys. The variation is very high in Himachal Pradesh (9.1%), Punjab (9%), Rajasthan (7.66%), Maharashtra (6.40%) and Andhra Pradesh (6%) whereas it is very negligible in Kerala (0.2%) and Gujarat (0.2%)<sup>37</sup>. There are nine states where stunting afflicts more girls and this incidence is visible at a higher level in Meghalaya and West Bengal, five per cent and 3.50 per cent respectively. Children in the poorest households are more than twice as likely to be stunted compared to the richest households as per the global statistics. The CNNS points out that wealth disparity is a key factor in the Indian states - 49 per cent of children in poor wealth quintile are more likely to be stunted compared to 19 per cent in the richest quintile. As per the CNNS, the prevalence of stunting peaked at 40 per cent at around two years of age and slowly declined to 30 per cent by the fifth year of life.

The third National Family Health Survey<sup>38</sup> (NFHS -3) found that 48 per cent children were stunted whereas it was 38.40 per cent as per the NFHS-4. When the CNNS data on stunting is compared to NFHS 3 it shows a decline by 13.30 per cent and when compared with that of NFHS 4, a meagre 3.70 per cent decline can be noticed. It is a commendable achievement. But what is more worrying is the fact that the incidence of stunting still remains high at 34.70 per cent, as per the CNNS.

**B. Wasting**

Wasting<sup>39</sup> is another form of acute undernutrition and children who suffer from it may have a high prevalence of death. As per GNR 2018, globally, 50.50 million children under five years of age are wasted, and more than half of them, that is nearly 26.90 million are living in South Asia. According to a WHO study, the burden of wasting is highest in South Asia where one in six children is wasted. The burden of wasting is highest in India with more than 25.50 million wasted children<sup>40</sup>. Food insecurity, frequent incidence of diseases, inadequate caring capacities, poor delivery of goods and services under health sector and certain socio-cultural practices are the reasons for the vulnerability of children leading to wasting. As per the CNNS, under the five years of age, 17.30 per cent of children were wasted across the country. Jharkhand has the highest rate of wasting at 29.10 per cent, followed by Tamil Nadu (21%), West Bengal (20.10 %), Madhya Pradesh (19.6%), Assam (19.4%), Chhattisgarh (19.3%) and Karnataka (19.3%)<sup>41</sup>. There are 10 states where the prevalence of wasting is higher than the national average (Refer Table No.1). As per the Survey, it was found that Mizoram with 5.80 per cent is the lowest among the states and it is followed by Uttarakhand (5.90%) and Manipur (6 %). The burden is high in rural households and it is also noticed globally. The disaggregated wasting figures in rural and urban households are 17.60 per cent and 16.30 per cent, respectively. Wasting among the children in rural households is more than their counterparts in urban ones in 19 major states. It is the highest in Odisha and Jharkhand with the difference being around eight points. There are two states (Punjab and Tripura) where no difference in wasting is found between rural and urban households. Wasting is predominantly high among the children in the rural households of seven states and Bihar is the highest in this category. It is also found that 18.30 per cent boys are wasted compared to girls whose figures are less by two points. The same trend is seen in varying degrees in 23 states with Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh at the top position; it is higher by seven and five points respectively. Only in six states wasting is higher among girl children and Delhi is the top in this category with difference being by 12 points.

The NFHS 3 found that 19.80 per cent of children are wasted and it was 21 per cent under the NFHS 4, or an increase of 1.20 percent between the two surveys. It is a disturbing trend when the timeframe of the two NFHS are taken into account. However, a positive trend is seen when the CNNS data on wasting is compared to NFHS 3 and NFHS 4, as it declined by 2.50 per cent and 3.70 per cent respectively.

### **C. Underweight**

As per the GNR 2018, nearly 20 million babies are born of low birth weight/ underweight<sup>42</sup>each year. The prevalence of underweight is highest in South Asia which has a rate of 33 per cent followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 21 per cent. It is a paradox that some countries have low underweight prevalence but unacceptably high stunting rates, which needs further research. The CNNS also shows that at the national level 33.40 per cent of children under five are underweight. Jharkhand has the highest number of underweight children with 42.90 per cent, followed by Chhattisgarh at 40 per cent and Bihar at 38.70 per cent (Refer to Table No. 1). The burden of underweight is above the national average in seven states whereas it is very low in the North-eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir. The rural- urban divide is very wide with a difference of around 10 per cent higher in rural areas across the states. In all the states except three (Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh and Haryana), the concentration of underweight children is found in rural households. A difference of around five per cent higher in urban households is seen in Delhi whereas the rural-urban divide is less than one per cent in Arunachal Pradesh and Haryana. In Telangana and Odisha, the burden of underweight is among the children is double in rural households compared to their counterparts in urban households. The prevalence of underweight among boys is 32.50 per cent, which is less than the national average of 33.40 per cent and less than that of girls by one percentage. Underweight among boys is very high in the households of Punjab and Jammu Kashmir, higher than girls by around seven points. The burden of underweight divide along gender lines is more among boys in 18 states whereas it is the opposite in the remaining states. Bihar needs special mention because underweight of girl children compared to boys is more by 10 points.

According to the NFHS3 data, 42.50 per cent of children are underweight and it reduced into 35.70 per cent when the NFHS 4 was conducted with a difference of achievement by 6.80 per cent. During the time of CNNS, the burden of underweight has reduced again to 33.40 per cent, a notable decline of 2. 30 percent. Details regarding the number of stunted, wasted and underweight children under five years of age in India is given in Table No:1.

#### **Prevalence of Stunting, Wasting and Overweight in Children Aged Five to Nine Years**

Table No. 2 has the details regarding the number of stunted, wasted and overweight children aged five to nine years across the states in India. As per the CNNS, in India, 21.90 per cent children aged five to

nine years are stunted. It was found that 23 per cent children in the same age bracket are thin and 3.70 per cent of children are overweight<sup>43</sup>. As per Table No.2 the prevalence of stunting among children aged five to nine years was lowest in Tamil Nadu with 9.70 per cent and Kerala<sup>44</sup> at 11 per cent. The prevalence of stunting was highest in Meghalaya with 34 per cent<sup>45</sup>. Nearly one-quarter of children (23%) are thin or have low Body Mass Index (BMI). Among children, the prevalence of low BMI was highest in West Bengal (28.30 per cent), Karnataka (28.20 per cent), and Telangana (28 per cent). It is lowest in Mizoram with 5.10 per cent.

### **The Prevalence of Thinness and Overweight Among Adolescents in India**

As per the CNNS, 24.10 per cent adolescents aged 10 – 19 years are thin. The prevalence of leanness is 33.20 per cent among the adolescents aged 10 – 14 years while it less at 24 per cent for adolescents aged between 15 and 19 years. In the case of overweight, 4.80 per cent of adolescents are overweight. Details regarding the anthropometric profile of adolescents in all the states in India are given in Table No.3.

### **Anaemia among All Age Groups**

The CNNS throws light on the worrisome trend of anaemia among children under five years of age, which is 40.60 per cent. There is no significant variation among boys and girls. In the NFHS 3, the figure was 69.50 per cent and it came down by 18 points under NFHS4. There seems to be a significant drop in anaemia cases between the two NFHSs and it further came down to 40.60 per cent under CNNS. Though the trend is declining over the period of reference from NFHS3 to CNNS, the present rate of anaemia is posing a big challenge to India as it aims to bring down the rate by nine per cent in 2022. In all states except Kerala<sup>46</sup> anaemia is a serious health problem. As per the CNNS, among children under five years of age, the prevalence of anaemia is highest in Madhya Pradesh with 54 per cent, followed by Haryana at 48 per cent and Delhi at 47 per cent. There is a correlation between the education status of mother and prevalence of anaemia in children. It was found that 40.60 per cent anaemic children have mothers who never went to school. The prevalence of anaemia dropped to 34.60 per cent in children under the same age bracket whose mothers had completed 12 years of schooling. Majority of the children from low income households in rural areas are found to be anaemic as per the CNNS. Again, poor socio-economic status, illiteracy among mothers, improper maternal, infant and child feeding practices, poor sanitary and environmental conditions, restricted access to

quality-oriented health facilities, inequitable food distribution are the identified reasons for anaemia among children and women. This is reinforced by the fact that anaemia is more prevalent among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes under the same age bracket. More than half of the vulnerable sections of society, that is around 53 per cent, are found to be anaemic.

Among school age children 23.50 per cent are anaemic and the prevalence is high by three points among girls and by 15 points among Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Under the same age bracket anaemia is more prevalent in Tripura at 41 per cent, followed by Assam at 35 per cent, Jharkhand and West Bengal at 34 per cent each. The prevalence of anaemia varied by the schooling status of children. The prevalence of anaemia was higher among out-of-school-children aged five to nine years than those currently in schools.

According to the CNNS, 28.40 per cent of adolescents are anaemic. The disaggregated figure on gender has a variation of 22 points, which is disadvantageous to females. It is found that 39.50 per cent of adolescent females in reproductive age are anaemic while it is only 17.50 percent for males falling under the burden. Among the respondents, 2.70 per cent of adolescent females below 20 years of age who were married and have become mothers were severely anaemic. When compared to general population under the same age bracket, the prevalence is high by around 10 points among Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Anaemia among adolescents is high in West Bengal at 46 per cent, Tripura at 41 per cent and Assam at 37 per cent. In these states, the prevalence of anaemia was much higher because of poor socio-economic status and low level of education among mothers. The lowest prevalence of anaemia among adolescents was reported in Nagaland at eight per cent and Kerala at nine per cent. The prevalence of anaemia is lower among school attending adolescents than those out of school.

### **Iron Deficiency among All Age Groups**

The CNNS also looks in to various nutritional deficiencies among all age groups. It shows that 32 per cent children under five years of age, 17 per cent school age children and 22 per cent of adolescents have iron deficiency or low serum ferritin. Female adolescents have a higher prevalence of iron deficiency compared to male adolescents. To explain it further, 31 per cent of female adolescents have iron deficiency while only 12 percent of male adolescents have the same deficiency. Children and adolescents in urban areas have a higher prevalence of iron deficiency compared to their rural counterparts. According to the CNNS the consumption of iron rich foods is higher among Muslim

and Christian children. This is a positive trend when compared with their counterparts from Hindu community.

### **Folate Deficiency among All Age Groups**

Nearly 23 per cent of children aged below five years of age have folate deficiency, (a type of anaemia) and prevalence of folate deficiency is higher among school age children and adolescents. Among the school age children, it is 28 per cent and 37 per cent among adolescents. The CNNS findings point out an interesting association between household wealth and folate deficiency in children. The majority of school age children and adolescents from the wealthiest quintile were folate deficient when compared to their counterparts hailing from poor households. It is found that 30 per cent school age children from wealthy quintile were folate while it was only 21 per cent from the poor quintile. The same trend is seen among adolescents for whom folate deficiency is high among the wealthiest quintile by 15 points.

### **Micronutrient Deficiencies among All Age Groups**

Micronutrient deficiency is defined as a condition in which there is a lack of essential vitamins and minerals required in small amounts by the body for its proper growth and development. Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals that have to be consumed in small quantities that are essential for a healthy body. Vitamin A, iron, zinc, calcium are examples of micronutrients.

#### **A. Vitamin A Deficiency**

Among pre-school children, 18 per cent of them are Vitamin A deficient. The prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency is up to 22 per cent among school age children and 16 per cent among adolescents. The prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency is higher among children in poor households. It is reported that 27 per cent of pre-school children among the poor households were Vitamin A deficient while only 11 per cent children in rich households had this deficiency. Similarly, the prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency among school – age children in poor households is 28 per cent while it is only 16 per cent of school – age children from rich households. Jharkhand has the highest prevalence of Vitamin A deficiency among pre schoolers with 43 per cent. Goa has the lowest prevalence in this category. Among school age children, Vitamin A deficiency is higher in Mizoram with 47 per cent, followed by Jharkhand at 42 per cent. Lowest prevalence was recorded at Rajasthan and West Bengal. In the case of adolescents, highest prevalence was reported at Jharkhand with 30 per cent, and Chhattisgarh with 26 per cent.<sup>47</sup>

### **B. Vitamin D & Zinc Deficiency**

In the case of Vitamin D (it is also known as sunshine vitamin) deficiency, despite high level of dairy consumption, nearly 19 per cent of pre – school children in urban areas had Vitamin D deficiency, while it is only 12 per cent in rural areas. In rural areas, children had high zinc deficiency, which causes growth retardation and loss of appetite.

### **C. Vitamin B12 Deficiency**

In the case of B12 deficiency, 14 per cent of pre-school children, 17 per cent of school age children, and 31 per cent of adolescents have B12 deficiency, as per the CNNS. Among pre -school children, Gujarat has 29 per cent with B12 deficiency. Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have 31 per cent and 32 per cent school age children are suffering from B12 deficiency and 48 per cent of children among adolescents in Gujarat has B12 deficiency.

### **The Role of Mother’s Education and its Impact on Nutritional Status**

One of unique aspects of the CNNS is that it establishes a strong correlation between the mother’s education and its impact on the nutrition and health status of children. Around 31 per cent of mothers of children under five years of age never attended school. Only 20 per cent of mothers of children under the age of five years have completed 12 years of schooling. The level of stunting, wasting, and underweight are found to be higher in children under five years of age whose mothers received no schooling as opposed to children under the same age bracket whose mothers have completed 12 years of schooling. To explain it further, 19.30 per cent children under five years of age are stunted and their mothers are not educated whereas only 5.90 per cent of children, whose mothers have completed 12 years of schooling, are stunted. In the case of underweight children, 14.80 per cent children under five years of age are underweight and as per the CNNS their mothers had no schooling. Nearly 5.10 per cent of children whose mothers completed 12 years of schooling are underweight. 5.70 per cent of children wasted had mothers with no education and 4.30 per cent of children whose mothers completed 12 years of schooling were wasted. As per the NFHS 4 data, the prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age, who are born to mothers with no education almost doubled when compared with children of mothers who had 12 years or more schooling. The CNNS points out that a higher per cent of stunting and underweight prevailed among the children who were out of school than school going children. To explain it further, 38 per cent of out-of-school-children were found



to be more stunted and underweight while 20 per cent of school going children were stunted.

One of the major reasons behind low rate of stunting and underweight among school – going children would be the Mid-Day Meal Scheme<sup>48</sup>. The CNNS makes a key observation regarding the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. Around 82 per cent of children in government schools reported that they get mid-day meals. It is an inevitable part of the diet of children studying in government schools in the country. The meal is provided to all students in primary and upper primary schools run by the government, government aided schools and education guarantee scheme schools. Overall, at least half of the children in classes one to eight in India get a mid- day meal, as per CNNS.

As per the CNNS, 42 per cent of women having school – age children have not attended any schools and 30 per cent are suffering from undernutrition in all forms. Meanwhile, 12 per cent mothers of school age children have completed 12 years of schooling and nearly 10 per cent of their children suffered from all forms of malnutrition. Majority of the out-of-school-children belonged to low income households in rural India. In the case of adolescents, around 75 per cent of them were currently attending school. The CNNS indicates that 24 per cent of adolescents are too thin for their age. The main reason behind this is that 53 per cent of the mothers of adolescents who are thin have never attended school and only seven per cent of mothers of this category have completed 12 years of schooling.

As per the CNNS, failure to provide minimum acceptable diet<sup>49</sup> and poor dietary diversity are to be blamed for poor nutritional status and overall, well-being of children and adolescents in India. In addition to that, it clearly illustrates that educational status of the mother plays a crucial role in ensuring their child get minimum acceptable diet as well as a diversified diet except in the case of breast-feeding practices. One of the most shocking findings in the CNNS is that only 6.40 per cent of children aged 6- 23 months get a minimum acceptable diet. Children under less than two years of age in relatively affluent states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat are not getting a minimum acceptable diet. On the other hand, children in states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam, Odisha, generally viewed as backward in terms of development, get better minimum acceptable diet. As per the NFHS 4 data, 9.60 per cent children aged 6-23 months received adequate diet.<sup>50</sup> When compared with NFHS 4, the figure 6.40 per cent is disappointing as there is a 3.20 per cent decrease. As per the State of the World Children Report 2018 by UNICEF, in India around 10 per cent children under the age of two get minimum acceptable diet. The Global Hunger Index Report

2019 says that in India, just 9.60 percent of all children between six and 23 months of age are fed a minimum acceptable diet<sup>51</sup>. Minimum acceptable diet, meal frequency and dietary diversity are the three core indicators of nutrition deficiency among infant and young children. As per the CNNS with higher levels of schooling in a mother, children received better diets or minimum acceptable diets. Only 3.90 per cent of children, whose mothers had no schooling got minimum acceptable diet, while 9.60 per cent of children, whose mothers have completed schooling got minimum acceptable diet. Only 11.40 per cent children of mothers with no schooling received adequately diverse meals, while 31.80 per cent of children, whose mothers had completed 12 years of schooling, received diverse meals. In addition to that, 7.20 per cent children, (whose mothers have no schooling) consumed iron rich foods, whereas 10.30 per cent of children (whose mothers completed 12 years of schooling) consumed iron rich foods. The proportion of children aged two to four, consuming eggs, milk and other dietary products, fruits and vegetables increased with the level of education of their mothers and household status. It was found that 49.80 per cent children in the same age bracket, whose mothers did not go to school, consumed dairy products, while 80.50 per cent of children, whose mothers have completed 12 years of schooling, consumed the same. In the case of school-age children and adolescents, only 25.40 per cent of children in the five to nine age group with uneducated mothers received eggs, but 45.30 per cent of children, whose mothers have completed 12 years of schooling consumed eggs.

The CNNS has come up with some interesting findings, which other nutritional surveys have not taken into consideration. The first one is the link between nutritional status of children and the educational status of the mother. The survey repeatedly stresses on the fact that children receive better diets depending upon the educational level of the mothers. Relation between poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition is an accepted fact.

### **Prevalence of Non – Communicable Diseases among Children and Adolescents**

While the CNNS repeatedly emphasises that higher levels of education among mothers would play a pivotal role in ensuring a better nutrition status and health of their children, there is a flip side too. As per the CNNS, a higher level of education among mothers meant that their children received less meals frequently, mainly due to the chances of being employed, commuting long distances for work and so on. More than half of the children born to uneducated mothers received meals frequently while only 36.20 per cent children of educated mothers

received meals frequently<sup>52</sup>. The Survey indicates that children of well educated and working mothers received meals less frequently and as a result these children were more prone to lifestyle diseases like diabetes. The main reason for this problem is that due to low frequency of meals and due to wealth status, children and their parents resort to fast foods.

Nearly 31.40 per cent school going children and 36 per cent of adolescents ate fried foods once a week. Around 7.60 per cent school going children and 10.40 per cent of adolescents drank aerated drinks once a week. Due to higher consumption of sugary drinks and food high in cholesterol, the prevalence of lifestyle disease is increasing among school going children and adolescents. As per the CNNS, 10.30 per cent of school going children and 10.40 per cent of adolescents are pre – diabetic<sup>53</sup>. One per cent of school age children and adolescents are found to be diabetic. Around five per cent of school age children are overweight. Tamil Nadu and Goa have the highest number of adolescents who are either overweight. The lowest prevalence of overweight children was in Jharkhand and Bihar, where less than one per cent are overweight.

The CNNS shows that socio-economic status of the households has a direct impact on whether a child will be overweight and underweight. Around one tenth of children in the highest health quintile are overweight while only one per cent of children from households in the lowest wealth quintile are found overweight. Children in urban areas suffered from obesity than those in rural areas. In urban areas, 7.50 per cent of school age children are overweight while 2.60 per cent children falling under the same age bracket are overweight in the rural areas. In the case of adolescents, 9.70 per cent of adolescents from urban areas were overweight as compared to 3.20 per cent in rural areas. Overweight and obesity was least prevalent among Scheduled Tribes<sup>54</sup>. The CNNS points out those adolescents in India are suffering from abdominal obesity and this fat increases the risk for non-communicable diseases. The highest percent of abdominal obesity was measured in children from Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa. Around seven per cent of such cases are noticed from each one of these states. Among adolescents, the highest abdominal obesity was observed in Delhi at seven per cent while in Tamil Nadu it is 6 per cent. To evaluate the nutritional status, the sub scapular skin fold thickness of children and adolescents are assessed. Eight per cent school age children had high sub scapular skin fold thickness and six per cent of adolescents also had the same. It was reported that 3.20 per cent of school age children and 3.70 per cent of adolescents have prevalence of high total

cholesterol. Around 26.10 per cent of school age children and 28.20 per cent of adolescents have low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Prevalence of high low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol was 3.30 per cent among school age and 3.80 per cent among adolescents. As per the CNNS, around 34 per cent of school age children and 16.10 per cent of adolescents had high triglycerides, a kind of fat in blood. Five per cent of adolescents suffer from blood pressure. Seven per cent of school age children are at the risk of developing chronic kidney disease.

Malnutrition in all its forms, which includes undernutrition, wasting, stunting and underweight as well as overweight and resulting diet related non-communicable diseases continue to be a significant health problem and a burden on India's further development. Various studies and experts have stated that undernutrition in early childhood increases the risk of children becoming obese or overweight later in life<sup>55</sup>. The empirical research also suggests that undernutrition early in life, even when the child is in the womb, can predispose to overweight and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease later in life<sup>56</sup>.

#### **Part IV: Schemes for Nutrition Management**

This part presents the schemes for nutrition management in India. There is no dearth of policies and schemes when it comes to reducing malnutrition in the country but the impact it has on the health and nutrition of children in India is yet to achieve its full potential. Despite multiple health schemes running in parallel especially those focusing on primary health care of children as well as pregnant mothers, India is lagging behind. Let's first have a closer look at the policies and schemes launched by the Government of India to tackle malnutrition. Here, we are presenting four schemes which have major components to address malnutrition.

##### **A. Integrated Child Development Scheme**

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)<sup>57</sup> is one among them. ICDS model is dubbed as one of the most successful models in ensuring child health and nutrition. It was launched with the goal of improving nutrition, health and development of children from birth to six years of age, monitoring and educating pregnant and lactating mothers. Launched in 1975, ICDS is considered as one of the largest nutrition schemes in the world, but it is still not enough to combat malnutrition in India.

A study titled the 'Impact of Anganwadi Centres Services on Infant Survival in India'<sup>58</sup> found that nutritional services offered by the ICDS

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was a significant determinant when it comes to survival of infants. Though it is true that infant mortality rates have come down in the past few decades, ICDS is not solely responsible for that progress. On the other hand, various studies have cast doubt on the findings that ICDS had a significant effect on malnutrition. Despite the support of government in the form of financial assistance for ICDS, the results in terms of a change in incidence of malnutrition have not been forthcoming especially in states like Bihar. The allocation for anganwadi services increased by 11 per cent from Rs.17,890 crores in Financial Year 2018-19 to Rs. 19,834 crores in the financial year 2019-20<sup>59</sup>. There are a large number of vacancies in posts for Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and Lady Supervisors (LSs). As on June 2018, one fourth of sanctioned positions for CDPOs and 32 per cent of sanctioned positions for LSs are lying vacant in the country<sup>60</sup>.

Various studies on ICDS programme in India stated that lack of regular program evaluation by Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) have resulted in ineffective and inefficient implementation of services, limited access to AWCs, shortage of anganwadi workers, less salary or increments for anganwadi workers have affected the smooth functioning of ICDS and AWCs. And due to this ICDS has failed to produce tangible results when it comes to tackling malnutrition<sup>61</sup>. Failure to raise awareness among the target groups by ICDS functionaries has resulted in children among zero to six years age group, expectant and nursing mothers to be left out of the services offered by AWCs. There were also reports that government has failed to supply the food material to AWCs on time. Apart from that, replacing freshly cooked meals with ready – to – cook mixes supplied by the Center is another reason. It is reported that not all states have replaced freshly cooked meals. While the government claims these ready to cook meals are far safer and they will give adequate micronutrients, health experts and nutritionists have warned that these packaged foods are filled with excessive micronutrients which can pose serious health problems or risks in children. Experts have warned that consuming micronutrient – fortified food on an empty stomach is not healthy and cannot be considered a proper meal. Government, which is trying to reduce the consumption of junk food, is promoting the same by forcing children to consume packaged food. As a suggestion, steps should be taken to strengthen ICDS system and AWCs and authorities have to ensure that healthy meals are provided to children and infants.

## **B: Mid-Day Meal Scheme**

Mid-Day Meal Scheme launched in 1995 is considered to be the largest school feeding programme in the world. Mid-day meal is an inevitable part of the diet of children studying in government schools in India. The primary aim of the scheme was to increase enrolment in primary schools and to ensure the nutrition status of children<sup>62</sup>. National Institute of Nutrition based in Hyderabad conducted a study on Mid-Day Meal Scheme across 70 districts in 20 states and Union Territories in 2017-18 found that 92 per cent of children going to government schools are benefitting from Mid-Day Meal Schemes. It also stated that 80 per cent of the parents who participated in the CNNS agreed that the scheme has improved enrolment as well as the attendance of the children. While this study commissioned by HRD Ministry calls the implementation of Mid-Day Meal scheme as largely successful<sup>63</sup>. Dreze and Goyal have opined that apart from boosting school attendance and child nutrition mid- day meals have an important socialization value and foster gender equity. They are of the opinion that children learn to sit together and share a common meal and as a result one can expect erosion of caste prejudices and class inequality.

Various reports made by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) have casted a doubt on the execution of Mid-Day Meal scheme and its impact on the enrolment, exaggeration of enrolment figures, financial irregularities involved in the implementation process, the issue of poor quality of food being served were mentioned in a CAG report placed in Parliament in 2017. The report said that the quality of food served in school continues to remain poor across the country. Cooking of poor-quality meals in unhygienic conditions, inadequate and poor infrastructure in terms of kitchen sheds and utensils were also reported. The CAG audit conducted in 2015 also came up with similar findings. The audit report stated that enrolment in government schools where Mid-Day Meal Programme is in force has been on the decline for the past few years. From this one can understand that the strategy of the scheme to enrol more children to primary education by ensuring food is not working. CAG audit report 2015 also mentions that children are not getting even the recommended basic minimum quantity of food and it had a negative impact on the nutritional level of children. As per the CAG audit report the number of children who have enrolled in the Mid-Day Meal Scheme has come down from 146.9 million in 2009 - 2010 to 138.7 million in 2013- 2014<sup>64</sup>.

Meanwhile, as per the CNNS, 82 per cent of children in government schools reported that they get mid-day meals. The mid-day meal is an inevitable part of the diet of children studying in

government schools in the country. The meal is provided to all students in primary and upper primary schools run by the government, government aided schools and education guarantee scheme schools. Overall, at least half of the children in classes one to eight in India get a mid-day meal. As per the CNNS, Mid-Day Meal Programme is still a success when it comes to improving nutritional status of children as the survey specifically claims that, the stunting, wasting and low weight among school going children were relatively less when compared with out-of-school-children. On the whole, if the government, be it the Central or State government, should set up a mechanism to monitor the Mid-Day Meal programmes in schools to ensure good quality food are being served, to eliminate corruption involved in the implementation of the programme and fudging of data.

### **C: POSHAN Abhiyan**

POSHAN Abhiyaan (Prime Minister's Overreaching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment)<sup>65</sup> also known as National Nutrition Mission, launched in 2018 is one among the latest schemes introduced by the Government of India to make the country malnutrition free by 2022. This scheme aims to reduce stunting by two per cent, undernutrition by two per cent, anaemia by three per cent and low birth weight by two per cent per year by 2022. AWCs serve as the point of delivery of all health-related schemes including POSHAN Abhiyaan. But the ground reality is that AWCs are struggling with a lot of problems and an infrastructural problem is one among them. It is seen that 24 per cent of AWCs operated from rented buildings as they don't have a building of their own, 14 per cent of AWCs lacked pucca buildings. In addition to that, only 86 per cent of AWCs had facilities for drinking water, 67 per cent had electricity connections and 68 per cent had toilets which were not functional. Since AWCs play an important role in the implementation of the POSHAN Abhiyaan Scheme, the inefficiency and poor performance of AWCs will have a negative impact on this scheme. A study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research in 2019 said that many states in India may not be able to accomplish their targets under POSHAN Abhiyan unless problems related to AWCs are not improved. Here the government should do something seriously to strengthen AWCs as they serve as the point of delivery for all health schemes including that of POSHAN Abhiyan. If AWCs are ill equipped they won't be able to deliver these health schemes on time and this will fail the targets envisioned by POSHAN Abhiyan. It focuses only on undernutrition and anaemia and does not mention over nutrition. The problem of over nutrition should also be addressed through this programme. Policies should also be made to address

obesity and lifestyle diseases among children and adolescents. Taxes should be imposed on unhealthy food and take steps to improve the quality of food provided in public institutions or under the food programme of the government. Encouragement and time should be provided to children to take part in sports and useful exercises at school. If these health issues are not addressed, the burden of non – communicable disease will exact a terrible cost on the development of India and reduce its contribution to global health and economic development.

Lack of dietary diversity can lead not only to high undernutrition but also to obesity and issues related to being overweight. When there is lack of dietary diversity, children will only get nutrition from the same group of food belonging to the high calorie category. But calorie rich foods are deficient in micronutrients and other kind of nutrients like amino acids, fatty acids that are required for growth and development of children.

#### **D: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana**

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)<sup>66</sup> is a flagship scheme of the government for pregnant women and lactating mothers. It is a direct benefit transfer scheme under which cash benefits are provided to the bank accounts of pregnant women directly to enhance nutritional needs and to partially compensate for wage loss during child birth and child care. Under this scheme, pregnant and lactating women receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000 in three installments – one during the early registration of pregnancy, second during ante – natal check – up and registration of birth of the child and third installment during the first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family. According to the Ministry of Women & Child Development, there are more than one crore beneficiaries and as of September 2019, Rs. 4000 crores have been disbursed to the beneficiaries. Meanwhile, maternity benefits under PMMVY is not available for women who have regular employment with central/ state government or a public sector undertaking. There have been various opinions regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of the scheme. As per the data provided by Right to Information Act (RTI) in November 2019, around 61 per cent of eligible mothers got the benefit under the PMMVY between April 2018 and July 2019 (38.3 lakh out of the total 62.8 lakh enrolled) and received Rs. 6000 offered per woman under the scheme<sup>67</sup>. But as per the report, the scheme has failed to reach around 49 per cent of pregnant mothers. However, these schemes are yet to make a full-fledged impact on the nutrition and well being of mothers and children. If the flaws and drawbacks in implementation and monitoring of these schemes are

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rectified India might be able to achieve the malnutrition-free status in the near future. But in the present scenario, India has still a long way to go to achieve the goal of a malnutrition free country.

#### **Part IV: Covid 19 and Nutrition**

Food security for children and adults has become a cause of concern in the wake of Covid 19 pandemic, especially in India. It is not that India is not doing enough to improve the health of its children and adults,; in fact, India has rolled out various programmes including ICDS, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, POSHAN Abhiyan and schemes like PMMVY. Though these schemes have helped in addressing the nutrition crisis, the worsening social and economic condition in the aftermath of Covid-19 has pushed the nutrition issue to the back seat. Not only that, the progress so far achieved in improving the nutritional status of vulnerable sections including infants and expectant mothers will be reversed.

The nation-wide lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19 has led to children being deprived of nutritious food. In addition, loss of wages and looming poverty have forced thousands of migrant workers<sup>68</sup> along with their families to walk miles and miles to their home towns and villages. Majority of them walk with an empty stomach including children and women. Apart from migrant workers, the nutritional status of infants, pregnant and lactating women and senior citizens would be severely affected. The United Nations in its recently released policy brief warned that the economic adversity due to the lockdown in the wake of the deadly pandemic could lead to more child deaths in 2020.<sup>69</sup>

Studies suggest that elderly people with underlying diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases are more at risk of getting infected by the novel Corona virus<sup>70</sup>. But that does not mean children will not be infected with Covid-19. As we all know, we need strong immunity to keep diseases at bay. People with weak immune system are at high risk of contracting diseases like Covid-19. Therefore, to have a good immune system, one should consume healthy food. To explain it further, there is a strong connection between nutrition status and immunity. For example, a malnourished child, whose immunity and nutritious status is very weak, can easily get infected by the novel Corona virus. Malnourished children with impaired immune system are more susceptible to deadly diseases and have higher mortality risk.

In addition to that, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases among children and adolescents have been mentioned in the CNNS. Even those overweight and obese are prone to Covid-19. The Global

Nutrition Report 2020 also warns that due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, India along with 88 other countries are likely to miss the global nutrition targets by 2025. In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025.<sup>71</sup> It requires governments to reduce stunting by 40 per cent in children under five and wasting to less than five per cent. The prevalence of anaemia should be reduced by 50 per cent among women in the age group of 19 – 49 years and ensure 30 per cent reduction in low birth weight and no increase in childhood overweight. It also called for increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50 per cent.

But as per the GNR 2020, India will miss targets for four nutritional indicators which include stunting among children under five, anaemia among women of reproductive age, childhood overweight and exclusive breastfeeding. The report also identified India as a country with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition. “Inequity is a cause of malnutrition — both under-nutrition and overweight and other diet-related chronic diseases. Inequities in food and health systems exacerbate inequalities in nutrition outcomes that in turn can lead to more inequity, perpetuating a vicious cycle,” says the GNR, 2020<sup>72</sup>. It is high time government and policy makers should seriously look into the nutritional and healthy well being of its children as well as pregnant and lactating women, who are apparently more vulnerable to Covid-19 and other diseases.

#### **Part V: Conclusion**

The good health practices preached and practised by Mahatma Gandhi over a century ago are relevant even today. Walking and engaging in physical activities, good intake of fresh vegetables and fruits, consuming food items low in sugars, salt and fats, avoid tobacco and alcohol, maintaining environmental cleanliness and personal hygiene are some among them. It is interesting to note that what Mahatma Gandhi advocated and preached decades ago is now being preached by health experts, nutritionists and World Health Organisation (WHO). Lindley<sup>73</sup> has also asserted the same in his recent work entitled ‘Gandhi on Health’. According to the CNNS, a balanced diet is essential for healthy growth and development of children and adolescents. As per the CNNS, a balanced diet consists of seven food groups; grains, roots and tubers, legumes and nuts, dairy products, flesh food, eggs, vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables.

Mahatma Gandhi always recommended consumption of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, less sugary, less oily, less salty, and low-fat food. These healthy items of food suggested by Gandhi

decades ago can act as deterrent for various lifestyle diseases plaguing the population of India. The simple diet adopted by Gandhi can be used to address the nutrition crisis in the wake of Covid -19. But to incorporate Gandhi's diet into our daily lives, we have to attain self-sufficiency in food production at local level. Therefore, a sustainable policy package to address affordable healthy food and nutritious diet by decentralized governance may be needed. For instance, Gandhi advocated locally grown fresh vegetables and fruits; it can be made possible if we start small scale farming in our own backyards. With Covid-19 worsening, the economic slump down and looming poverty can lead to severe food insecurity and scarcity in India. There is a strong correlation in income and demand for food. Covid-19 has led to loss of livelihood, jobs and wages and if people don't have any income, they cannot afford to consume healthy and nutritious food. Agriculture sectors serve as the backbone of our country and contribute to 17 per cent of the GDP with majority of people engaged in agriculture and allied activities to make their both ends meet. But the deadly pandemic and the rigorous lockdown have been a huge blow to agriculture and food sectors. This has led to shortage of food items, the prices for essential items are also soaring and this will cause a negative impact on food security. In short, we are going through difficult times; Covid-19 has put both lives and livelihood at stake. At this juncture, Gandhiji's simple and affordable dietary practices can help us to stay healthy.

Appendix

Table No. 1 : Number of Stunted, Wasted and Underweight Children under Five Years of Age in India

Anthropometric Profile of Children under Five Years							
S. No.	State	Indicators Assessed	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	34.30	28.30	26.80	32.60	31.50
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	18.90	15.20	16.80	17.20	17.10
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	33.70	33.20	28.40	34.70	33.50
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	29.60	26.20	22.00	29.90	28.00
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	7.40	6.30	7.80	6.50	6.80
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	16.60	14.30	16.10	15.30	15.50
3.	Assam	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	34.20	30.60	28.70	32.80	32.40
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	9.70	19.00	18.50	19.40	19.40

		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	30.80	28.00	26.60	29.70	29.40
4.	Bihar	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	41.30	42.70	40.00	42.20	42.00
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	14.80	14.30	18.50	14.20	14.50
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	33.90	43.60	34.80	39.10	38.70
5.	Chhattisgarh	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	36.90	33.60	26.00	37.70	35.40
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	20.20	18.30	16.60	20.00	19.30
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	41.50	38.40	30.10	42.60	40.00
6.	Delhi	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	28.10	29.60	28.90	23.80	28.80
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	3.90	15.70	14.80	13.10	14.80
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	28.40	27.70	28.20	23.70	28.10
7.	Goa	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	21.10	18.00	20.60	18.30	19.60

		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	16.10	15.60	16.30	15.30	15.80
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	21.30	19.30	19.60	21.20	20.30
8.	Gujarat	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	39.20	39.00	33.80	42.70	39.10
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	17.90	15.90	13.90	19.00	17.00
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	36.30	31.70	27.30	38.70	34.20
9.	Haryana	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	37.20	32.30	36.80	33.90	34.90
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	13.10	10.20	14.20	10.40	11.70
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	29.90	27.40	28.80	28.70	28.80
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	32.70	23.60	18.80	28.80	28.40
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	11.50	10.60	14.70	10.90	11.00
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	22.10	23.20	16.80	22.80	22.60

11.	Jammu & Kashmir	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	17.40	13.80	14.60	15.70	15.50
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	12.70	16.70	12.90	15.40	14.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	16.60	10.10	9.40	14.20	13.10
12.	Jharkhand	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	35.40	37.30	23.60	38.30	36.20
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	29.10	29.10	22.10	30.20	29.10
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	39.60	47.40	30.00	45.00	42.90
13.	Karnataka	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	31.90	33.10	19.90	38.60	32.50
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	20.20	18.50	19.90	19.10	19.30
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	30.70	33.90	23.60	36.60	32.40
14.	Kerala	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	20.60	20.40	19.50	21.40	20.50
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	14.20	10.80	10.30	14.60	12.60

15.	Madhya Pradesh	Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	20.20	17.10	16.80	20.30	18.70
		Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	40.50	38.50	33.60	40.06	39.50
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	22.10	17.20	13.20	20.80	19.60
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	40.10	37.40	32.70	39.90	38.70
16.	Maharashtra	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	37.30	30.90	29.70	38.10	34.10
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	17.90	15.80	18.80	15.10	16.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	30.20	31.70	26.50	34.80	30.90
17.	Manipur	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	29.80	27.90	17.60	33.30	28.90
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	6.60	5.50	4.30	6.70	6.00
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	13.40	12.40	8.50	14.70	13.00
18.	Meghalaya	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	37.90	42.90	28.20	42.10	40.40



		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	18.00	11.30	10.90	15.30	14.70
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	29.80	29.40	20.60	30.90	29.60
19.	Mizoram	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	28.20	26.60	22.00	32.20	27.40
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	5.60	6.10	5.30	6.20	5.80
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	10.20	12.40	8.10	14.00	11.30
20.	Nagaland	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	27.10	25.30	20.70	27.60	26.20
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	12.70	13.00	9.20	13.80	12.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	16.6	16.0	12.3	17.3	16.3
21.	Odisha	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	27.70	30.40	20.00	30.40	29.10
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	14.40	13.40	6.40	15.00	13.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	26.00	32.30	14.30	31.30	29.20

22.	Punjab	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	28.60	19.60	23.70	24.70	24.30
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	9.00	4.10	6.70	6.70	6.70
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	22.90	16.20	15.80	21.90	19.70
23.	Rajasthan	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	40.06	32.40	24.90	39.60	36.80
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	14.80	13.80	13.10	14.60	14.30
		Children under age five years who are underweight	33.20	29.50	23.70	33.30	31.50
24.	Sikkim	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	22.00	21.50	17.10	23.70	21.80
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	7.60	6.30	7.00	6.90	6.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight	1.50	10.20	10.10	11.10	10.80
25.	Tamil Nadu	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	21.00	18.50	18.50	20.80	19.70
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	22.30	19.20	19.80	21.50	20.70

		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	24.30	22.80	21.00	25.80	23.50
26.	Telangana	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	28.50	30.10	15.70	38.20	29.30
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	19.70	16.00	17.80	18.00	17.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	31.90	29.70	19.70	38.00	30.80
27.	Tripura	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	32.50	31.40	24.20	34.80	31.90
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	14.00	11.60	12.80	12.80	12.80
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	22.70	24.80	15.30	26.90	23.80
28.	Uttar Pradesh	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	38.50	39.20	31.80	40.10	38.80
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	19.20	17.70	17.90	18.60	18.50
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	34.30	39.50	29.70	38.10	36.80
29.	Uttarakhand	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	30.40	29.40	23.30	32.40	29.90

		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	5.10	6.70	5.40	6.10	5.90
		Children under age five years who are underweight (%)	16.90	20.60	15.30	20.00	18.70
30.	West Bengal	Children under age five years who are stunted (%)	23.60	27.10	19.40	26.60	25.30
		Children under age five years who are wasted (%)	21.30	18.90	19.70	20.20	20.10
		Children under age five years who are underweight	29.00	33.00	24.40	32.40	30.90
	<b>India</b>	<b>Children under age five years who are stunted (%)</b>	<b>35.40</b>	<b>34.00</b>	<b>27.30</b>	<b>37.00</b>	<b>34.70</b>
		<b>Children under age five years who are wasted (%)</b>	<b>18.30</b>	<b>16.30</b>	<b>16.30</b>	<b>17.60</b>	<b>17.30</b>
		<b>Children under age five years who are underweight</b>	<b>32.50</b>	<b>34.40</b>	<b>25.80</b>	<b>35.70</b>	<b>33.40</b>

Source: Computed by authors from CNNS and Fact Sheet.

*Table No. 2 : Number of Stunted, Thin and Overweight Children Aged Five to Nine Years in India*

Anthropometric Profile of Children aged 5-9 years							
S. No.	State	Indicators Assessed	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	22.1	20.3	17.4	22.3	21.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	25.1	16.2	20.5	20.9	20.8
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	8.0	8.5	13.2	6.9	8.2
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	21.5	15.2	13.9	19.8	18.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	8.9	9.9	10.3	9.1	9.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	9.9	9.1	15.0	7.5	9.5
3.	Assam	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	25.7	26.4	25.1	26.2	26.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	25.5	23.7	15.7	25.5	24.6

		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	7.8	6.9	10.0	7.1	7.4
4.	Bihar	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	27.8	29.2	27.5	28.6	28.5
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	25.7	17.6	21.0	21.4	21.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	1.1	0.5	3.3	0.5	0.8
5.	Chhattisgarh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	20.2	21.9	17.4	22.0	21.0
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	26.4	21.0	21.7	24.2	23.7
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	1.8	1.7	3.4	1.3	1.8
6.	Delhi	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	18.0	24.0	21.2	12.0	21.0
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	19.0	18.0	18.5	18.7	18.5
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	7.2	4.9	6.1	4.2	6.0
7.	Goa	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	13.8	14.6	13.3	15.3	14.2

		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	22.6	19.6	21.1	21.2	21.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	15.1	13.9	13.0	16.5	14.5
8.	Gujarat	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	25.0	28.0	23.7	28.1	26.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	22.2	20.0	16.8	23.9	21.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	5.2	5.8	7.4	4.3	5.5
9.	Haryana	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	14.5	18.8	17.1	16.1	16.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	22.7	17.8	15.1	23.1	20.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	3.7	3.6	5.0	3.0	3.7
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	17.8	22.5	9.8	20.8	20.3
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	27.0	17.9	18.3	22.4	22.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	5.1	2.7	8.5	3.6	3.8

11.	Jammu & Kashmir	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	13.5	13.1	5.0	15.5	13.3
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	17.6	15.7	11.0	18.2	16.6
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	9.5	8.4	12.8	8.0	9.0
12.	Jharkhand	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	22.2	27.5	16.4	26.1	24.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	28.6	27.2	29.8	27.6	27.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	0.4	0.6	1.9	0.3	0.5
13.	Karnataka	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	22.8	20.2	14.5	24.7	21.5
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	30.3	26.1	21.4	31.3	28.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	3.3	4.3	6.2	2.7	3.8
14.	Kerala	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	10.7	11.6	9.7	12.5	11.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	18.5	13.8	14.1	18.3	16.3



		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	10.7	8.3	9.9	9.2	9.6
15.	Madhya Pradesh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	24.1	18.3	20.6	21.3	21.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	28.7	15.1	21.7	21.8	21.8
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	1.8	1.1	2.6	1.2	1.4
16.	Maharashtra	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	25.1	24.3	22.5	26.6	24.7
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	26.8	20.0	22.8	23.9	23.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	7.5	6.1	9.0	4.8	6.8
17.	Manipur	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	20.4	19.3	12.2	22.6	19.8
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	7.5	4.7	3.9	6.9	6.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	11.6	5.5	8.7	8.4	8.5
18.	Meghalaya	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	35.7	32.2	22.7	36.3	34.1

		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	11.4	7.1	10.2	9.2	9.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	8.1	4.5	4.5	6.8	6.4
19.	Mizoram	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	21.9	25.3	15.8	30.1	23.6
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	6.5	3.7	5.4	4.9	5.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	10.7	8.1	12.7	6.7	9.4
20.	Nagaland	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	27.7	21.1	21.5	25.3	24.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	7.2	8.6	9.7	7.3	7.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	13.1	16.2	14.7	14.7	14.7
21.	Odisha	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	24.5	18.2	14.7	22.4	21.4
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	20.7	16.8	12.7	19.7	18.8
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	8.7	6.8	18.2	6.2	7.8

22.	Punjab	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	11.2	13.9	14.7	11.1	12.3
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	14.0	8.9	12.6	11.6	11.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	7.9	8.0	8.2	7.8	7.9
23.	Rajasthan	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	23.3	24.7	19.8	25.0	23.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	22.5	21.5	19.3	22.7	22.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	1.6	1.5	3.5	1.1	1.6
24.	Sikkim	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	19.1	18.4	15.1	20.0	18.8
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	10.7	7.1	8.3	9.2	9.0
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	13.1	7.9	16.7	8.4	10.6
25.	Tamil Nadu	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	9.5	9.8	8.2	11.0	9.7
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	23.6	14.4	17.9	20.5	19.2

		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	8.7	10.4	11.4	7.8	9.5
26.	Telangana	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	15.6	15.3	13.5	16.6	15.5
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	31.4	24.2	22.9	31.1	28.1
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	5.5	4.2	11.0	1.5	4.9
27.	Tripura	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	29.6	26.1	24.6	29.1	27.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	24.4	14.6	14.8	21.4	19.6
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	13.5	9.5	20.1	8.3	11.6
28.	Uttar Pradesh	Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	21.4	20.9	16.2	22.2	21.2
		Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	28.1	23.7	21.6	26.8	25.9
		Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	2.3	0.8	4.7	0.9	1.6
29.	Uttarakhand	children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	22.4	18.3	16.5	21.9	20.4

		children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	16.1	12.2	12.5	14.8	14.2
		children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	6.8	5.4	10.1	4.5	6.1
30.	West Bengal	children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)	14.3	23.2	12.5	20.5	19.3
		children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)	28.4	28.2	18.6	30.6	28.3
		children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)	6.0	3.0	12.8	2.4	4.4
	<b>India</b>	<b>Children aged five to nine years who are stunted (%)</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>21.9</b>
		<b>Children aged five to nine years who are thin (%)</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>
		<b>Children aged five to nine years who are overweight / obese (%)</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.7</b>

*Source:* Computed by authors from CNNS and Fact Sheet

Appendix

Table No. 3 : Number of Thin and Overweight Adolescents Aged 10-19 Years in India

Anthropometric Profile of Adolescents Aged 10-19 Years							
S.No.	State	Indicators Assessed	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Andhra Pradesh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	22.8	16.0	15.8	21.1	19.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	7.6	10.5	13.6	7.3	8.9
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	10.8	4.4	9.9	6.8	7.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.2	12.9	10.9	11.0	11.0
3.	Assam	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	22.7	16.4	18.2	19.8	19.7
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	2.9	5.6	9.3	3.6	4.2
4.	Bihar	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	29.8	16.6	21.1	23.0	22.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	2.0	1.7	3.1	1.7	1.9

5.	Chhattisgarh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	24.6	12.7	15.2	19.2	18.4
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	4.7	3.8	6.7	3.6	4.2
6.	Delhi	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	21.9	20.5	21.2	23.6	21.3
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	14.0	10.3	12.4	6.9	12.3
7.	Goa	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	24.2	19.3	20.3	23.7	21.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	13.4	15.1	13.7	14.8	14.2
8.	Gujarat	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	35.6	24.6	26.8	32.6	30.2
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	7.8	8.0	13.4	4.1	7.9
9.	Haryana	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	22.2	18.6	22.3	19.8	20.6
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	5.3	3.5	7.0	3.3	4.5
10.	Himachal Pradesh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	31.4	30.8	14.0	31.8	31.1

		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	7.9	3.1	8.5	5.4	5.5
11.	Jammu & Kashmir	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	15.4	11.4	12.6	13.6	13.4
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	8.7	8.5	11.9	7.7	8.6
12.	Jharkhand	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	33.0	23.9	25.7	28.8	28.4
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	2.1	1.8	4.0	1.6	1.9
13.	Karnataka	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	33.7	20.9	21.9	29.4	27.2
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	6.5	8.3	10.7	6.1	7.4
14.	Kerala	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	24.8	15.5	18.3	21.6	20.1
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.3	9.6	10.3	8.7	9.5
15.	Madhya Pradesh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	38.5	25.5	25.0	33.5	32.0
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	1.6	1.7	4.9	0.9	1.7



16.	Maharashtra	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	29.7	18.4	21.4	27.5	24.6
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	8.3	5.3	10.7	3.4	6.9
17.	Manipur	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	6.8	5.4	6.5	5.9	6.1
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	7.8	9.0	8.9	8.2	8.4
18.	Meghalaya	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	8.7	4.4	9.8	6.1	6.7
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	2.4	4.7	4.8	3.2	3.5
19.	Mizoram	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	7.3	5.5	4.4	8.2	6.4
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	7.4	8.2	9.6	6.2	7.8
20.	Nagaland	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	12.1	7.6	8.2	10.8	10.0
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.9	8.8	9.8	9.2	9.4
21.	Odisha	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	20.6	16.3	11.3	19.7	18.5

		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.1	6.4	19.5	5.8	7.8
22.	Punjab	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	17.6	18.1	17.0	18.2	17.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	11.3	6.6	9.9	8.7	9.1
23.	Rajasthan	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	35.1	23.6	23.4	30.8	29.3
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	2.6	3.1	6.6	1.9	2.8
24.	Sikkim	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	14.5	5.3	10.0	9.5	9.6
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	6.1	12.0	12.8	8.3	9.2
25.	Tamil Nadu	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	25.1	15.2	17.7	22.6	20.0
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	13.0	15.6	16.4	12.0	14.3
26.	Telangana	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	34.2	22.7	23.3	31.6	28.8
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	5.1	6.3	10.4	3.3	5.7

27.	Tripura	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	18.1	14.5	14.4	17.1	16.3
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.8	8.5	16.0	6.5	9.2
28.	Uttar Pradesh	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	28.6	17.0	17.4	23.5	22.5
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	1.2	3.0	6.6	1.3	2.1
29.	Uttarakhand	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	16.9	13.6	12.5	16.2	15.3
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	5.1	5.2	13.9	2.2	5.2
30.	West Bengal	Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)	30.7	20.3	19.3	27.0	25.5
		Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)	9.2	6.0	15.2	5.8	7.6
	<b>India</b>	<b>Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are thin (%)</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>18.9</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>24.1</b>
		<b>Adolescents Aged 10-19 who are overweight / obese (%)</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Source: Computed by authors from CNNS and Fact Sheet.

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15. Mahatma Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1983). Dietetics is the scientific study of how food and nutrition affect health of the people.
16. Mark Thomson, *Gandhi and his Ashrams* (Mumbai: Popular Prakasan.1993).

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17. *The Bhagavad Gita* also known as the Song of the Lord, is one of the world's most influential and widely read spiritual books in the world. Mahatma Gandhi translated the Bhagavad Gita from Sanskrit to his native Gujarati. There is a book called *The Bhagavad Gita According to Gandhi*. The book is based on a series of talks given by Gandhi between February and November 1926 at the Satyagraha Ashram in Ahmedabad, India.
18. As per Gandhi's personal records it has been written that during his active political campaign, he walked around 18 km every day for nearly 35 years. During his political campaigns from 1913 to 1948, he walked a total of 79,000 km, which is equivalent to walking around the earth twice.
19. Gavaravarapu, Subba Rao M, and R Hemalatha. "Thought for Food: Mahatma's Views on Nutrition, Controlled and Balanced Diets." *The Indian journal of medical research* vol. 149, Suppl (2019): S119-S127. doi:10.4103/0971-5916.251668. Also see, Leitzmann ,Claus, "Vegetarian Nutrition: Past, Present ,Future", *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* ,Vol 100 ,Issue 1, 2014, URL retrieved- <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.113.071365>
20. M. K Gandhi, *The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism* op. cit., p.7
21. Ibid, p.20.
22. Ibid, p.4.
23. Bhusi is the Hindi term for Bran. Bran consists of minute brown flakes that are left when wheat grains have been used to make white flour.
24. Micronutrients are the vitamins and minerals that our body needs to become a healthy one. Calcium, Vitamin B12, Vitamin C, Iron, Magnesium, Zinc are examples of micronutrients. Although we only need small amount of micronutrients, the problem is that these vital nutrients are not are not produced in the body. They are derived from the nutrient rich food we consume in our daily life. Micronutrient deficiency can lead to stunted growth in children and various other diseases.
25. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. 2019. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) National Report, Chapter 3, P.49.
26. Reticulocyte Hemoglobin Content (CHr) is a measurement of hemoglobin inside the reticulocyte. Reticulocyte are also known as immature Red Blood Cells (RBCs). It correlates directly with the functional availability of iron in the bone marrow. At present, it is one of the gold standard method for diagnosing iron deficiency. (Reference – Agarwal MB and Swati Pai, 'Reticulocyte Hemoglobin Content (CHR): The Gold Standard for Diagnosing Iron Deficiency,' *Journal of The Association of Physicians of India*, Vol. 65, October 2017. URL retrieved- [https://www.japi.org/october\\_2017/01\\_editorial\\_reticulocyte\\_hemoglobin.pdf](https://www.japi.org/october_2017/01_editorial_reticulocyte_hemoglobin.pdf))
27. World Health Organization (WHO). 1993. Biomarkers and risk

- assessment: concepts and principles. Geneva Switzerland: WHO, p, 12 World Health Organization defines biomarker as “any measurement reflecting an interaction between a biological system and a potential hazard, which may be chemical, physical, or biological. The measured response may be functional and physiological, biochemical at the cellular level, or a molecular interaction.” For example Blood Pressure is a Biomarker. (URL Retrieved- <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/39037/9241571551-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>)
28. M de Onis, M., & F Branca “Childhood stunting: a global perspective”. *Maternal & child nutrition*, suppl:12–26. (2016), URL Retrieved- <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12231>.)
  29. Dr Abhay Bhang is a renowned social activist, researcher and founder of Society for Education Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), based in Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra. In 2013, an expert committee on Tribal Health was jointly constituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It was a 12 – member committee chaired by Dr. Abhay Bang.
  30. Stunting (low height-for-age) is used to diagnose chronic malnutrition in school-age children and adolescents.
  31. K. von Grebmer, J. Bernstein, R. Mukerji, F. Patterson, M. Wiemers, R. Ní Chéilleachair, C. Foley, S. Gitter, K. Ekstrom, and H. Fritschel. *2019 Global Hunger Index: The Challenge of Hunger and Climate Change*. (Bonn: Welthungerhilfe; and Dublin: Concern Worldwide, 2019), p. 14.
  32. 2020 Global Nutrition Report: Action on equity to end malnutrition (Bristol, UK: Development Initiatives, 2020).
  33. In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025. They are the following,
    - 1) Reduce stunting by 40 per cent in children under five years of age.
    - 2) Reduce anaemia by 50 per cent among the women in the age group of 19 – 49 years.
    - 3) Ensure a 30 per cent reduction in low – birth weight.
    - 4) Ensure no increase in childhood overweight.
    - 5) Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50 per cent.
    - 6) Reduce and maintain child wasting to less than 5 per cent.
  34. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), 2019.
  35. BIMARU is an abbreviation for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. The term was coined in 1980 by the demographer Ashish Bose.
  36. 2018 Global Nutrition Report: Shining a light to spur action on nutrition (Bristol, UK: Development Initiatives, 2018).

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37. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), 2019.
38. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large – scale survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India. The NFHS is a collaborative project of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, India, ORC Macro, Calverton, Maryland, USA and the East – West Centre Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India have designated IIPS as the nodal agency responsible for offering and providing the coordination and technical guidance for the NFHS. The NFHS covers recent trends in population and demographics, health and nutrition indicators, as well as a range of health – related issues, including fertility, infant and child mortality, maternal and child health, prenatal mortality, adolescent reproductive health, prevalence of HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and non – communicable diseases. Four National Family Health Surveys have been conducted so far. The First National Family Health Survey (NFHS – 1) was conducted in 1992 – 93. The Second National Family Health Survey (NFHS – 2) was conducted in 1998 – 99. The Third National Family Health Survey (NFHS – 3) was conducted in 2005 – 2006.(URL – NFHS – 3 <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FRIND3/FRIND3-VOL2.pdf>).The Fourth National Family Health Survey ( NFHS – 4) was conducted in 2014 – 2015. (NFHS – 4 - <http://rchiips.org/NFHS/NFHS-4Reports/India.pdf>)
39. Wasting, or low weight-for-height, is a measure of acute undernutrition and represents the failure to receive adequate nutrition leading to rapid weight loss or failure to gain weight normally.
40. According to the UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group, 2018, An estimated 26 million children aged under five years are wasted in South Asia, which is over half of the global burden of wasting. India is home to four out of five of these children and lies at the epicentre of this global public health problem, with 22 million children wasted, and over eight million severely wasted at any one time, according to the UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group, 2018. United Nations Children’s Fund, World Health Organisation, World Bank. Levels and Trends in Child Malnutrition: Key Findings of the 2018 Edition of the Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates; 2018. Available from: <https://www.data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/JME-2018-brochure-web.pdf>.
41. Jos Chathukulam, “Child malnutrition in Karnataka a worrisome development”, *Deccan Herald*, 26 January 2020(URL Retrieved: <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/main-article/child-malnutrition-in-karnataka-a-worrisome-development-798390.html>)
42. Underweight, or low weight-for age, is a composite index that takes into account both acute and chronic undernutrition. Children are

defined as underweight if their weight-for-age is more than two standards deviations below ( $< -2SD$ ) the WHO Child Growth Standards median (WHO, 2009).

43. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. 2019. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS).
44. Jos Chathukulam, "Child Nutrient Deficiency in Kerala- An Assessment", *Southern Economist*, Vol 58, 1 March 2020, No. 21.
45. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) National Report, 2019, p. 113.
46. Early writings on Kerala expressed that hunger, malnutrition and anemia had been put under rapid reduction of food rationing system. See Joseph Tharamangalom, "Human Development as Transformative Practice", *Critical Asian Studies*, Volume 42, 2010, Issue 3.
47. *ibid*
48. According to the website of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, Mid – Day Meal Scheme was launched in August 1995 as National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP – NSE). Though cooked food was to be provided, most states (apart from those already providing cooked food) chose to provide "dry rations" to students. "Dry rations" refers to the provision of uncooked 3 kg of wheat or rice to children with 80% attendance. Meanwhile, prior to the central scheme, states in India including Tamil Nadu (1962 – 63), Gujarat (1984), Kerala (1984) implemented Mid – Day Meal Schemes in the primary schools. In the 1990's, nearly 12 states started giving cooked Mid – Day meals to primary school students. In 2001, cooked Mid Day Meal Scheme became mandatory under which every child in all Government and Government aided primary and upper primary school to be served a cooked Mid Day Meal with a minimum content of 300 calories of energy and 8 -12- gram proteins per day for a minimum of 200 days.
49. Proportion of children 6–23months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet (both minimum dietary diversity and the minimum meal frequency) in the last 24 hours. Minimum dietary diversity is the proportion of children aged 6 – 23 months who received solid, semi – solid or soft foods in the last 24 hours. Minimum meal frequency is defined as the frequency of food intake for children 6 to 8 months twice a day and for 9 to 23 months old three times a day.
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51. K. von Grebmer, J. Bernstein, R. Mukerji, F. Patterson, M. Wiemers, R. Ní Chéilleachair, C. Foley, S. Gitter, K. Ekstrom, and H. Fritschel, *op.*



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52. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, UNICEF and Population Council. Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS), 2019.
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  54. Ibid.
  55. M Heidari-Beni, "Early Life Nutrition and Non-Communicable Disease", *Adv Exp Med Biol.*2019, pp. 1121:33-40. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-10616-4\_4
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  59. Budget Brief 2019-20: Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Avani Kapur and Ritwik Shukla, Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research, Dharam Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021 BUDGET BRIEFS, Vol 11/ Issue 3
  60. Ibid.
  61. NITI AAYOG 2014.(URL Retrieved- [https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document\\_publication/report-awc.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/report-awc.pdf)) and Timsit Anabelle " Inside India's ambitious effort to provide early care and education to 400 million kids," *Quartz*, India, April, 14,2019. (URL Retrieved- <https://qz.com/india/1584703/indias-icds-anganwadi-system-is-a-challenged-but-impressive-effort/>)
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  63. Sumi Sukanya Dutta," HRD Ministry survey reveals mid-day meal scheme a big success," *The New Indian Express*, July 4, 2018. (URL retrieved - <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/jul/04/hrd-ministry-survey-reveals-mid-day-meal-scheme-a-big-success-1837862.html>)
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  65. POSHAN Abhiyan- Scheme for Holistic Nourishment, National Portal of India (URL retrieved -<https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/poshanabhiyaan-pms-overarching-scheme-holistic-nourishment>)
  66. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a flagship scheme of

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67. The RTI was filed by development economists Jean Dreze , Anmol Somanchi and Reetika Khera . Chandra Jagruti, “Maternity scheme reaches only one-third of beneficiaries”, *The Hindu*, November 2019. This RTI query was cited in the article. URL retrieved: [https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/maternity-scheme-reaches-only-one-third-of-beneficiariesarticle\\_30009783.ece#:~:text=The%20PMMVY%20is%20targeted%20only,and%20registration%20of%20child%20birth.](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/maternity-scheme-reaches-only-one-third-of-beneficiariesarticle_30009783.ece#:~:text=The%20PMMVY%20is%20targeted%20only,and%20registration%20of%20child%20birth.)
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  72. 2020 Global Nutrition Report op.cit.
  73. M Lindley, *Gandhi on Health* ( Jalgaon: Gandhi Research Foundation, 2019). Gandhi scholar and economist Mark Lindley is of the opinion that Gandhi’s diet and healthcare concerns harmonize very well with the diet and health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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# Solidarity Economics and Gandhian Economics : Can they supplement each other?

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper looks at the idea of solidarity economy currently in vogue in different parts of the world as an alternative to globalised market-based liberalism and brings out its different dimensions. It then looks at the key Gandhian economic ideas and try to identify areas where the idea of solidarity economy converges with Gandhian ideas. It is one of the presumptions of this paper that the move in the direction of a solidarity economy both in the developing world and the developed world is a shift which tends to vindicate the Gandhian economic ideas.*

Keywords: solidarity economics, gandhian economics, social economy, relational wealth, reciprocity

## Introduction

THE IDEA OF solidarity economy is closely associated with the cooperative movement and the worker's movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 'solidarity economy' movement had its beginnings in Latin America and France in the early 1980s focused on alternative economic practices and institutions and has now become an international movement with the establishment of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy. It is a move to develop constructive alternatives in opposition to neoliberal capitalist economic relations. This is not to say that there is high degree of coherence in the ideas upheld by these groups. In fact, it is a loosely

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organized movement for survival in the midst of the havoc the capitalist system has created by laying emphasis on protection and preservation of indigenous values or alternative values consciously chosen. Solidarity economy is also particularly relevant in the context of realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is more so in matters related to inclusive growth (SDG 5, 8, 10), reducing wastes and greenhouse gas emissions (SDG 11, 12, 13), affordable food production (SDG 2, 12), and promoting civic engagement and participation (SDG 5, 10, 17). This paper attempts to make a brief review of the solidarity economy idea in its various dimensions and examine the extent to which they dovetail with Gandhian ideas on society and economy.

The Covid-19 pandemic, recurrent floods and climate change pose great challenges for humanity. It is time that we seriously looked at the growth-oriented models to see whether they are still relevant. Sustainable development and economic growth are increasingly seen as two opposite extremes, the larger the former, the lesser the latter. The neo-classicist intent of attaining development through economic reductionism is a fantasy which relegates ethics, morals and social relations to a secondary position. Does ethical neutrality help us in any way? Why do developmentalists or economists stick to ethical neutrality? The World has witnessed how global capitalism is the bleakest way to development. The dominant idea of development was imposed by Global North and it was presumed that the Global South will be able to overcome poverty if they followed the same model. As time passed, no remarkable changes were seen in the developing countries. Instead, it only widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Globalisation heightened the evil effects of capitalist development. The post-development discourse of the 1980s and 1990s provided a critique of the linear notion of development propounded by the west as a universal category. The two setbacks of development thought are persistence of poverty and ecological imbalance. Many put forward the idea of alternative development or another development as some would like to call it. In 2000, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were initiated with eight international development goals to be achieved by 2015. But they failed to make any progress in spheres such as poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, communicable disease, education, gender inequality, environmental damage etc. In 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programme was initiated with 17 goals to be achieved by 2030.

Solidarity Economics is an emerging field in economics and is often considered as an alternate to development. Solidarity Economics

is based on cooperation, ethics and social relationships. Even earlier, there were works on ethical or moral factors in economics such as Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments. Solidarity Economics is considered as a means to ameliorate global capitalism's ill effects. The orthodox economics, "with its ontological construct of the homo economicus, Cartesian dichotomy and logical positivist epistemology severely constrains our abilities to understand and appreciate economic alternatives based on 'other' rationalities"<sup>1</sup>. 'Hegemonic social theory' fragments society into spheres: economy, society, culture and politics. Economy is seen as a self-regulating market system where invisible hand works to bring stability in the system. This was questioned by Karl Polyani, who said that "economy is embedded in society the diversity of social, cultural, and political ties are not external, but integral to it". The solidarity economy is perceived as a "plural system of institutions, norms, values, and practices which organise and coordinate the process of production, distribution, circulation and consumption, whose purpose is to generate the material basis for meeting the legitimate needs and desires of all, and to live with dignity and responsible freedom democratically and in harmony with nature. It assumes an ineluctable ethical principle opposed to the mercantile projects with endorsement of unrestricted accumulation at other's expense"<sup>2</sup>. The terms solidarity economy and social and solidarity economy are used synonymously throughout the article.

### **Solidarity as a Concept**

Until recently, the concept solidarity was neglected by theorists and economists as an analytical category which fills the motivational space between two extreme polarities of altruism and selfishness. Solidarity is a "condition of action readiness to perform actions favouring a certain group that rests in a conception of oneself as a member of that group". Altruism is synonymous to generosity and 'beneficiary-specific sympathy' and 'duty-bound philanthropy' also have similar connotations. Solidarity is not a form of generosity because "the solidary presents him or herself as an interested party, not a disinterested benefactor". 'Civic mindness' and 'bonafide othermindness' are different and do not entirely depend on a person's interest. Altruism/ selfishness dichotomy fails to address this problem and solidarity is able to fill this gap. Therefore, logical dichotomy between altruism and selfishness does not work in all situations and a trichotomy can be seen as a way out. Solidarity is seen as an analytical category which has been neglected and is placed between altruism and selfishness as a third category.<sup>3</sup>

There is ample literature on altruism and its variants. Some authors

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prefer to connect solidarity with altruism<sup>4</sup> variants. According to psychologists there are four types of altruism, namely nepotistic altruism, reciprocal altruism (mutualism), moral altruism and group-based altruism. Reciprocal altruism or mutual altruism<sup>5</sup> is preferred by solidarity economy experts. Mutual altruism tries to “integrate humans and nature centred on the principle of solidarity, recognising the co-evolution of humans and nature” and it is also called “cohesive development”.<sup>6</sup> Solidarity co-exists with reciprocity, person-specific sympathy, team-reasoning and Kantian duty.<sup>7</sup>

Some scholars compare Solidarity with Rational Choice Theory. Theory of solidarity is capable of capturing what rational choice theory fails to explain because the latter only explains “behaviour in response to preferences inhabiting the well-defined space within the walls separating oneself from an ‘other’. In the case of solidarity, the “walls are more porous than rational choice theory would permit; it alludes to a series of human interactions unfolding in the space between these walls, in a kind of no man’s land where the plight of others inspires us to experiment with violations of our current ‘preferences’, rationally toy with alternatives to the prevailing constraints of ‘rationality’, throw away the masks of self-sufficiency, reach out for one another, re-discover something ‘real’ and authentic about our nature and, at rare moments, believe that there is more to us than some weighted sum of desires.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Solidarity Economics / Economy as an alternative**

The presence of ‘solidarity economy’ is found all over the world and its nature differs from country to country, region to region, based on the context. Some countries view solidarity economy as an alternative to development and some limit it to solidarity as a movement only and others see it both as an alternative to development and a movement. Solidarity economy is an economy which seeks to “resist the colonizing power of the individualistic, competitive, and exploitative Economy of Empire”. Some of the features of solidarity economy are reciprocity, unity in diversity, shared power, autonomy, horizontal communication, cooperation and mutual aid and local rootedness. Solidarity Economics “is the process of identifying, connecting, strengthening and creating grassroots, life centered alternatives to capitalist globalization, or the Economics of Empire.”<sup>9</sup> In a market economy there is economic space for elements of a solidarity economy to exist such as cooperatives, micro finance, local currency and other mutual collective forms. Some view solidarity economics as an epistemological break, as an outcome of deconstruction of European foundations of economic and social

thought, and concurrently a “political strategy because it slowly but surely builds a plural economy capable of resisting the chantage of capital flight and disinvestment.”<sup>10</sup> Others look at solidarity economy more than a result or strategy; “it is a vital resource, a source of energy and perspective that helps us move beyond the pedantic and the pedestrian, and compels us to act out of a deeper, moral consciousness.”<sup>11</sup> Some scholars view social solidarity economy as “re-socializing economic relations.”<sup>12</sup> Solidarity economy as a concept is “an alternative to the hegemonic capitalist rationality and seeks to overcome the rationality deficit that has caused our civilizational crisis, replacing it with the concept of the economy as a social institution, whose ultimate purpose is to reclaim the market for social ends, and to bring capital under the democratic control of society, based on solidarity, fairness and sustainability.”<sup>13</sup>

According to Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) Social Solidarity Economy (SSE):

is an alternative to capitalism and other authoritarian, state- dominated economic systems. In SSE ordinary people play an active role in shaping all of the dimensions of human life: economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental. SSE exists in all sectors of the economy production, finance, distribution, exchange, consumption and governance. It also aims to transform the social and economic system that includes public, private and third sectors. SSE is not only about the poor, but strives to overcome inequalities, which includes all classes of society. SSE has the ability to take the best practices that exist in our present system (such as efficiency, use of technology and knowledge) and transform them to serve the welfare of the community based on different values and goals.”..(...) SSE seeks systemic transformation that goes beyond superficial change in which the root oppressive structures and fundamental issues remain intact. <sup>14</sup>

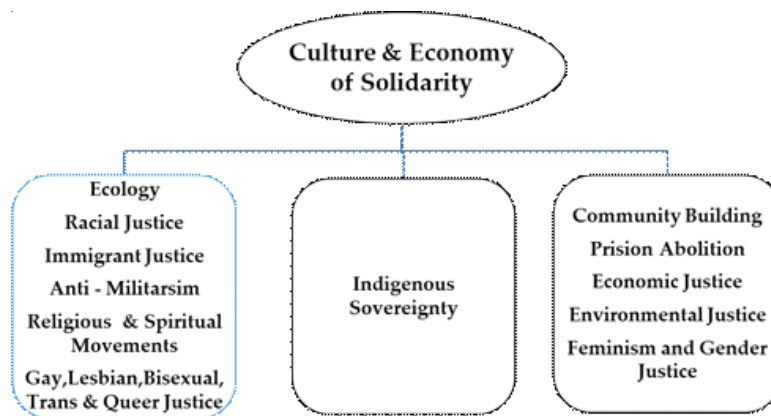
Solidarity economy is neither ‘charitable economy’ nor “informal economy” to ward off evils of globalisation.<sup>15</sup> Solidarity economy aims to balance ‘social fabric’ and democracy in all sectors through civil society.<sup>16</sup> With the widespread usage of the concept of ‘informality’<sup>17</sup> by International Labour Organisation (ILO) and academic and government institutions, as an academic response in Latin America in 1980s, it came to be known as “popular economy.”<sup>18</sup> The neoliberal policies resulted in widening social inequalities and this egressed ‘popular economy’ with a strong Marxist tint in Latin America. Popular economy encompasses not only basic organisations such as small enterprises but “the domestic unit, from which people develop labour strategies whether remunerated or not, intended for satisfaction of



needs.”<sup>19</sup> Eric Dacheux and Daniel Goujon emphasizes solidarity economy as a transitional economy. The transition from an “informal framework to legal framework” for informal activities, transition from survival to a subsistence economy and eventually to a plural economy, and bridging the gap and enabling the excluded and the banished to “reconstruct a collective identity through mutual support.”<sup>20</sup> Reciprocity in the solidarity economy entails complementary relations based on voluntary interdependence.<sup>21</sup>

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and Solidarity-based Economy (ALOE) asserts that solidarity economy is plural and implicitly identify various socio-economic stakeholders in diverse initiatives. The interaction of three forms of capital can be seen- economic capital which involves in the production, financing, exchange, and consumption of goods and services; social capital which comprises of values, culture, social relations, networks, institutional arrangements and governance of institutions; and ecological capital including the biodiversity of resources that sustain the solidarity economy.<sup>22</sup> Social solidarity economy focuses on welfare of people and planet concurrently through ethical and values-based approach rather than on “over profits and blind growth.”<sup>23</sup> Solidarity economy is not just about “ethical space of decision” but a kind of ethics which Foucault “might call morality.”<sup>24</sup> The solidarity economy reposes faith in holistic development and touches all areas of concern as shown in the figure below.

*Figure 1: Culture & Economy of Solidarity*



Adapted from Ethan Miller, “Solidarity economy: Key concepts and issues.” *Solidarity economy I: Building alternatives for people and planet* (2010): 25-41.

Solidarity economy has three dimensions, namely, political, economic and symbolic. The political dimension means that “collective political and economic interest” should be a reflection of “public debate” where all citizens are part of it to contribute and such deliberation determines the quality of life. Solidarity economy supports and gives importance to the Habermasian idea to cultivate communicative action in the public sphere. The economic dimension of solidarity economy is a “response to unbridled speculation”. Solidarity economy’s symbolic dimension points out that democracy strengthens with participation of civil society represented by citizens “in the political decision-making process and by embedding democracy in the economic system itself.” Therefore, political logic conditions economic logic.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars relate the features of solidarity economy like community, connectedness and cooperation with Proudhon’s theory of mutualism, which suggests that mutualised human action can be utilised to inculcate a desire for the realization of collective good.<sup>26</sup>

### **Solidarity Economy: A Conceptual Progression**

Solidarity economy is not a recent concept but has a history of deconstruction and refinement as years pass by. Solidarity economy emerged during the Spanish civil war as an economic organizing concept in 1937 by Felipe Alaiz, purported to form an ‘*economia soldaria*’ among the collective workers in the rural and urban regions. During the 1980s, the term became popular in France and Latin America.<sup>27</sup> The notion of solidarity economy as an economic model appeared in late 1970s and early 1980s to tackle poverty and inequality in Latin America. The third sector was sustained by solidarity economics and the process of community-based local development was centred on social capital rather than private enterprise and the state.<sup>28</sup>

The European version of solidarity economy or ‘*économie solidaire*’ evolved from its old roots of social economy. The difference between the two economies is that while the traditional economy “supplement or complement the existing social order”, the solidarity economy supported a more “transformative approach to economic activism”. In Europe, solidarity economy is often called as the ‘third sector’ or social economy.<sup>29</sup> In Colombia, the Solidarity economy egressed from cooperative movement whereas crucial features of solidarity economy have presence in the cooperative economies of Spain (Basque region) and Italy (Emilia-Romagna region).<sup>30</sup> In Chile, the concept of solidarity economy does not confine to any particular sector but cuts cross different sectors based on the ‘economic

rationality' of cooperation and solidarity.<sup>31</sup> Solidarity economy is visible in the form of labour unions, cooperatives non-profits and social movements in Canada (Quebec).<sup>32</sup>

By 1990s solidarity economy concept took the form of social movements in Latin America, Europe, and Canada. In 1997 a meeting of representatives of International Solidarity Group for the first time was held in Lima, Peru which later evolved into an international movement popularly known as the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy or RIPESS. By the late 2000s it spread throughout all levels (international, national, local) where RIPESS and World Social Forum contributed to the growth of solidarity economy in new regions.<sup>33</sup> Solidarity economy "is being organised from the bottom up, connecting horizontally, and developing from the top down. SE practitioners and intellectuals are active in the World Social Forum<sup>34</sup>, which brings together grassroots organisations, activists, and movements from the political left under the maxim "Another World Is Possible". Networks of SE practitioners, researchers, and activists are connected through RIPESS."<sup>35</sup>

Reciprocity, cooperativism, associationism, and direct democracy occasionally with support of social economy, the private sector and the state, characterise solidarity economy in places like Portugal and it has the "potential of changing cultural and political dynamics in the communities – regions - where it blooms."<sup>36</sup> In the case of Luxembourg, solidarity economy is viewed as the 'third pillar' of the economy. The first pillar, the State, focuses on redistribution and the second pillar, capitalistic enterprises, on profit, while in the case solidarity economy the keyword is reciprocity put into effect through civil society.<sup>37</sup> In Francophone Africa the term social and solidarity economy refers to the initiatives to "reactivate traditional community values."<sup>38</sup> Solidarity economy in Greece was initiated and accelerated owing to the sovereign debt crisis. The context of solidarity economy differs in other countries (eg. France) because "it is the direct offspring of a critical his-torical turn and consequent political radicalization."<sup>39</sup>

### **Third sector, Social Economy and Solidarity Economy**

Is social economy and the third sector one and the same? Social economy is allied with third sector and there is a subtle difference in that the latter is a broader concept which comprises of both 'profit and non-profit organizations', "distinct type of social practice embedded in organizational structures with clear characteristics."<sup>40</sup> NGOs come under the broader concept of social economy. But they differ in their commitment to principles of the social economy, which correlates with funding sources, self-interest, and ideology.<sup>41</sup> Social

economy “encompasses the work of any democratically controlled organization whose mission is both social and economic in nature.”<sup>42</sup>

Mike Lewis and Dan Swinney are of the opinion that solidarity economy “thrusts social economy actors into the spaces among and between the three economic sectors, inserting reciprocity as the dominant animating driver, creating a space for expanding solidarity.”<sup>43</sup> If there are three sectors in an economy, to which sector does solidarity economy belong? There are different viewpoints. Solidarity economy is spread across three sectors of the economy viz. private sector, public sector and the third sector<sup>44</sup> and does not belong to a particular sector but it “challenges ‘system’ smugness on the part of actors in all sectors.”<sup>45</sup> Solidarity economy “is a political construct that includes the social economy (cooperatives) and other social innovations and initiatives, such as social enterprises, that follow social solidarity principles of pursuing social, environmental and redistributive justice through cooperative, associative and solidarity relations.”<sup>46</sup> Social economy plays a key role by creating societal space for solidarity economy to expand and extend.

### **Community Development and Solidarity Economy**

Community development is inherent in solidarity economy; the economic approach prefers “decentralization and local development and is driven by ethical values such as solidarity, fair trade, voluntary simplicity and Buen Vivir.”<sup>47</sup> Some studies suggest that in some cases community development approach accommodates social capital and social entrepreneurship, which turns out as neoliberal tools for perpetuating capitalism. The studies on social capital majorly focus on positivity or negativity of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. These studies fail to take into account that “all forms of social capital are subject to power differentials, whether they are gender, time in the neighborhood, or ability to use force” and negative social capital is “inherently undemocratic.”<sup>48</sup> In such cases, solidarity economy is the only way out.<sup>49</sup> Some scholars believe that solidarity economy strengthens cooperation and solidarity among individual agents, mainly on a voluntary and reciprocal basis and that it need not promote community sentiment.

Penn Loha and Boone Shearb say that solidarity economy is a key to attain community development. Solidarity economy (SE) is a “set of theories and practices that engenders ethical economic relationships and new possibilities for democratic and transformative community development. SE advances democratic community development by providing an alternative to capitalist ideology from which the core goals of solidarity and agency can be imagined, identified, and

realized. Further, it advances a set of concrete economic practices that enact these goals while sustaining people and the planet.<sup>50</sup> Bottom-up approach is a common pattern of solidarity economy in various European countries initiated by civil societies or social solidarity economy organisations. The case of South Korea is different from the above, which followed same pattern of European countries earlier, but with the Asian financial crisis in late 1990s, it switched to a top-down approach.<sup>51</sup>

Some scholars contemplate that both traditional and new social solidarity economy (SSE)<sup>52</sup> challenge development discourse. In the EU and the US new social solidarity is acclaimed as 'social innovations', 'social economy' or social enterprise'. Traditional SSE and new SSE have the potential risk of putting "communities into shadow."<sup>53</sup> SSE can be and cannot be consciously radical.<sup>54</sup> SSE groups is not about mere innovations but it is seen "as returning to an economy with a moral compass after venturing into the dead-end street of mainstream economic practice."<sup>55</sup> The expansion of social and solidarity economy is made possible through "claiming spaces which enable dialogue and collective decision making among organised stakeholders" and "capacity development to build self-reliance and to enable self-management."<sup>56</sup>

Is solidarity economy a strategy or alternative development? Solidarity economy is mainly seen as strategy rather than as an alternative to development. Social and solidarity economy derives from the fact that it is functional for both pro-capitalism and anti-capitalism movements. Some scholars view solidarity economy as alternative development while some others view it as social movements aimed at social transformation by evading capitalistic tradition. In France, it is seen as re-emergence of the 'old' social economy which is "linked to the reaction against neo-liberal principles and individualist ideology."<sup>57</sup> Solidarity social economy in Latin America is "a project of collective action intended to counteract the destructive tendencies of capitalism, with the potential for constructing an alternative economy",<sup>58</sup> for example the Zapatista movement. Whenever solidarity economy is seen as a strategy, as a short term programme in order to overcome crises, it ends up as a mere temporary measure. Once crises are overcome, it will fade away, leaving it with no 'transformational potential'.

Pascal Glémain points out that recent work on solidarity economy failed to include Ivan Illich in the list of solidarity economy thinkers. Ivan Illich's work "the tools of conviviality" has links with SSE. Conviviality is "a set of ethical and political principles which form the basis of a non-violent and cooperative society, based on respect for

life and individual freedom, and for the environment." It is a social movement which "wants another civilization, a civilization of conviviality fighting against the inhumanity of the world." Ivan Illich's concept of humanist radicalism very well go with idea of solidarity economy in the sense that it "offers a singular approach which aims to advance man and the society of consciousness upon awakening, under the prism of a "humanist radicalism" introduced by Fromm to "liberate the future" by awakening the collective conscience."<sup>59</sup> Ivan Illich's concept of 'convivial society' has similitude with solidarity economy. He says that "Convivial society would be the result of social arrangements that guarantee for each member the most ample and free access to the tools of the community and limit this freedom only in favor of another member's equal freedom."<sup>60</sup>

Marlyne Sahakian pronounces that there is a linkage between social and solidarity economy (SSE) and industrial ecology, the former prioritises people while latter the environment. SSE embraces 'social equity', but 'issue of scale' is the greatest challenge. She argues that SSE is "not a magic wand solution and operates at the margins of the dominant capitalist economy, yet it is well underway and expanding, in research and practice."<sup>61</sup>

### **Sustainable Development and Solidarity Economy**

Solidarity Economy is considered as a way to attain sustainable development. Wolfgang Sachs, a post-developmental scholar says that the definition of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission would have been different if the members had read Gandhi seriously. The Commission defines sustainable development in terms of meeting "the needs of present generation without compromising with needs of future generation". The term 'needs' in the definition does not reflect what type of need because the need of a well off person and starved person differs so "all needs are not equally valid", which Gandhian economics also supports. Sachs says that "the lack of distinction between survival needs and luxury needs has become a pitfall of the debate on sustainability."<sup>62</sup> Some scholars attribute solidarity economy as a constructive critique of sustainable development which posits that "there can be no sustainable development without sustainable democracy."<sup>63</sup> The position paper of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE)<sup>64</sup> contended that post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) grabbed very little attention of social and solidarity economy, which has the inherent strength to survive the challenges posed by sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Peter Utting enunciates that social solidarity

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economy “promises to address the structural determinants of poverty, inequality and social and environmental injustice, and to bring about transformative change through integrated approaches that are inherent in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”<sup>65</sup> In Sustainable Development Goals,<sup>66</sup> the classical notion of development is narrowed down to meet the requirements for survival. “The Sustainable Development Goals should more fittingly have been called SSGs – Sustainable Survival Goals”,<sup>67</sup> according to Sachs.

### **Gandhian Economics**

Gandhi was a post-developmental even before the idea emerged as an alternative to development. Gandhian economics is an answer to ethically neutral economics, which evolved during the age of developmentalism. Gandhian economy is a need-based economy rather than a greed-based economy and is also sometimes known as spiritual economy. The major distinction between Gandhian economics and classical economics of both the capitalist and Marxian variety “lies in the underlying assumptions about human being and human conduct and therefore its moral underpinnings. Gandhian Economics is situated within a culture and its mores. While Capitalist and Marxian economics spans the left and right quadrants on the horizontal or X-axis, Gandhian Economics extends over the vertical or Y axis.”<sup>68</sup>

Gandhi was against the economic law which neglects moral values and ethics. Gandhian idea is inevitably bound up with Swadeshi, which brings in the necessity of economic localisation. Once Gandhi was asked<sup>69</sup> “Is the economic law that man must buy in the best and the cheapest market wrong?” He said:

It is one of the most inhuman among the maxims laid down by modern economists. Nor do we always regulate human relations by any such sordid considerations. An Englishman pays more (and rightly) for the English collier in preference to cheap (say) Italian labour. Any attempt to introduce cheap labour into England will lead to a revolution. It would be sinful for me to dismiss a highly paid faithful servant because I can get a more efficient and cheaper servant although the latter may be equally faithful. The economics that disregard moral and sentimental considerations are like wax-works that being life-like still lack the life of the living flesh. At every crucial moment these new-fangled economic laws have broken down in practice. And nations or individuals who accept them as guiding maxims must perish. There is something noble in the self-denial of the Mussulman who will pay more for food religiously prepared or a Hindu who will decline to take food unless it is ceremonially clean. We lost when we began to buy our clothing in the

cheap markets of England and Japan. We will live again, when we appreciate the religious necessity of buying our clothes prepared by our own neighbours in their cottages.

In Gandhian Economics material progress and moral progress have equal importance while in classical economics they both are negatively correlated. Gandhi delivered a lecture on 'Does economic progress clash with real progress?' at Muir Central College Economic Society, Allahabad, which was attended by large audience,<sup>70</sup> both Indian and European, other than the students. He said economic progress is material advancement and real progress is moral progress. He elaborated:<sup>71</sup>

Does not moral progress increase in the same proportion as material progress? I know that this is a wider proposition than the one before us. But I venture to think that we always mean the larger one even when we lay down the smaller. For we know enough of science to realise that there is no such thing as perfect rest or repose in this visible universe of ours. If therefore material progress does not clash with moral progress, it must necessarily advance the latter. Nor can we be satisfied with the clumsy way in which sometimes those who cannot defend the larger proposition put their case. They seem to be obsessed with the concrete case of thirty millions of India stated by the late Sir William Wilson Hunter to be living on one meal a day. They say that before we can think or talk of their moral welfare,<sup>72</sup> we must satisfy their daily wants. With these, they say, material progress spells moral progress. And then is taken a sudden jump: what is true of thirty millions is true of the universe. They forget that hard cases make bad law. I need hardly say to you how ludicrously absurd this deduction would be.

As material progress and moral progress should be proportionate in real progress, same way there are two types of affluence. First is a person embedded with only material goods while the second type affluence is where a person is surrounded by whom he/she cares and who cares for him/her. The second type of wealth is called "relational wealth" which is close to economic ideas of Gandhi based on 'caring', implied in his economic concepts of swadeshi, trusteeship, aprigraha, bread labour, non-exploitation and equality. Diwan says that spirituality is "deeply embedded in Relational Wealth and it brings forth all the ethical values and conduct implanted in the six Gandhian Economics concepts."<sup>73</sup>

Richard Gregg argues that the assumption of Keynes that capitalism can be wisely managed appears fundamentally impossible. The principle of capitalism as defined by Keynes himself, viz, "the dependence upon an intense appeal to the money-making and money



–loving instincts of individuals as the main motive force of the economic machine”<sup>74</sup> is contrary to the fundamental spiritual and moral unity of mankind. That is why capitalism troubles our hearts, as Keynes admits in the above quotation. That which is intrinsically false cannot be wisely managed.<sup>75</sup> And Gregg believed that Gandhian alternatives like decentralisation, small scale industries etc. are very effective in this regard.

Gandhian ideas are embedded with moral values, virtues, solidarity, cooperativism, nonviolence etc. and practice of these principle should be sustainable and not merely for short period of time, and then only Swaraj can be attained. In 1927, on reading the Gujarat’s flood reports in *Navjivan* Gandhi said:

I hesitated, and still hesitate, to believe in the examples there given of the people’s heroism, solidarity and humanity, as false praise, exaggeration and self-deception are the order of the day in the country. But I have no reason to disbelieve these reports..... For a moment one is almost tempted to welcome a disaster which has been the occasion for the people to display such virtues. Catastrophes and calamities will now and then overtake the country. Wealth may be in our possession today and be lost tomorrow. We construct houses and make farms and gardens, and when these are destroyed, we can remake them. The distress will soon be forgotten..... We are everywhere familiar with momentary fits of heroism and renunciation. If Gujarat’s present heroism proves to be only a temporary fit, the lesson of the floods will have been lost upon her..... If we now give up these relations as only suited for the days of adversity, our last state will be worse than the first, and we will have passed in vain through this calamity, which is really the throes of a new birth. And such calamities there will be, so long as we have not experienced a true rebirth. Gujarat’s doings on this occasion amount in my view to pure swaraj.<sup>76</sup>

According to Gandhi cooperative societies play a key role in the development of economy. He encouraged farming and dairy cooperatives and was against cooperative societies functioning merely to receive deposits and dispense with loans to generate profit. The following passage in regard to Kerala cooperatives reflects Gandhi’s views in this matter:

Kelappan came to see me two days ago and informed me that co-operative movement was going strong and had become very popular in Kerala. If the societies are sound, it was heartening news that Sjt. Kelappan gave me. I, however, expressed my serious doubts. The secret of successful co-operative effort is that the members must be honest and know the great merit of co-operation and it must have a definite progressive goal. Thus

holding a certain sum of money in cooperation for the sake of making more money by charging exorbitant rates of interest is a bad goal. But co-operative farming or dairying is undoubtedly a good goal promoting a national interest. Such instances can be multiplied. I wonder what these numerous Kerala societies are. Have they honest inspectors who know their work? It may be mentioned that such movements have often proved disastrous when the management has been dishonest and the goal questionable.<sup>77</sup>

Khadi<sup>78</sup> was an integral part of swadeshi movement in India and an alternative to industrialism promoted by Gandhi through a boycott of foreign goods. Swadeshi is a tool for a country to become self-sufficient and self-reliant. Gandhi said that “Khadi represented dharmik political economy, whereas industrialism was rakshasik or Satanic economics. For it stood for the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few.”<sup>79</sup> Gandhi conceived khadi organisations as ‘benevolent institutions’ and economic organisations which aims to promote public welfare by cornering the selfish motive of anybody. Through Khadi organisations people will be able to attain material welfare and spiritual welfare and “in democracy it is a rule to carry on work by humouring public opinion.” Gandhi points out the difference between the economics of Khadi and wealth economics of Adam Smith:<sup>80</sup>

Adam Simth has described some economic laws as universal and absolute. Then he has described certain situations which may be an obstacle to the operation of these laws. These disturbing factors are the human nature, the human temperament or altruism inherent in it. Now, the economics of khadi is just the opposite of it. Benevolence which is inherent in human nature is the very foundation of the economics of khadi. What Adam Smith has described as pure economic activity based merely on the calculations of profit and loss is a selfish attitude and it is an obstacle to the development of khadi; and it is the function of a champion of khadi to counteract this tendency<sup>81</sup>.

There is zero space for profiteering cheating, fraud, falsehood, adulteration, exploiting people’s addictions or their baser feelings in khadi activity, which does not mean that khadi organisations should incur losses. Instead, by minimizing the cost of production and improving the efficiency of the workers, losses can be evaded. In khadi activity spinners and other workers get full reward for their labour, but the middlemen and organizers get nothing more than their due share.<sup>82</sup> Kumarappa puts it rightly when he says, “...apart from the mere satisfaction of the physical needs of the people we

should aim at inculcating the spirit of self-help, mutual aid, and a consciousness of social solidarity. When we achieve this and we shall have travelled a long way on the road to Swaraj through self-sufficiency.”<sup>83</sup>

As Gandhi said, there is more to life than increasing its speed. Arvind Ashta cites the example of France’s slow money movements, which claim to have roots in Gandhian ideology. There are two types of concepts relating to money, namely, fast money and slow money. Fast money gives sole importance to profit and its features are “focus on short term, a lack of patience, a high volatility and the creation of new financial intermediation products, all linked globally to create systemic risk, by large financial organizations”. The alternative for ‘fast money’ is ‘slow money movement’ which is also a ‘patient capital’ and investment is done only in local entrepreneurial projects like farming and similiar basic livelihood activities. Slow money movement evades crisis and reduce depletion of resources, which is severe in the case of ‘Fast money’. Instead, there is a “a focus on long term, less intermediation, less volatility and smaller organizations at a more local level”<sup>84</sup>.

There are studies which claim that Gandhian economics has similarities with other alternative forms of economy. Thailand’s sufficiency economy is more consistent with Gandhian economics than Islamic finance. The three “are self-conscious rejections of particular aspects of modern western capitalist economics by non-Western actors in favor of economics shaped by their endogenous spiritual and cultural values”. Gandhian economics and sufficiency economy are “guided more by heuristic spiritual principles than by detailed frameworks of religious law” and Islamic finance is based “on codified religious laws of conduct and their interpretation”. Further, they are not mere religious economics, rather “they adopt a fully-fledged critique of the cosmological assumptions underlying modern economics”<sup>85</sup>.

#### **Gandhian Economics and Solidarity Economics: Are the two related?**

Gandhian Economics and Solidarity Economics belong to the same school of thought, the critique of capitalism / western civilization suggests a call for an ethical, moral, and just economy. They both challenge the ethical neutrality of mainstream economics. Both Gandhian economic thought and solidarity economics encompass post development ideology. They both are people –centric rather than ethnocentric. Both Gandhian and solidarity economy’s emphasis on ‘caring’ brings them closer. The areas of focus of Gandhian and solidarity economy as are community/ local development, decentralisation, localisation, environmental preservation and

cooperatives.

Solidarity Economics is an emerging field in economics and an alternative to mainstream development. Solidarity Economics is based on cooperation and ethical and social relationship. Gandhian Economics revolves around the six economic concepts, namely, swadeshi, trusteeship, aprigraha, bread labour, non-exploitation and equality in order to attain Swaraj. Gandhian Economics evolved long before the idea of solidarity economics got crystallised. Instead of short-term economic goals we need a long term perspective, which are relected both in Gandhian economy and solidarity economy.

### **COVID - 19 Crisis : Gandhian and Solidarity Economy**

COVID-19 crisis is one of the most grievous and uncertain crises faced by human race in recent history. Globalisation accelerated the spread of COVID- 19 pandemic all over the world. It is time to rethink the type of development that we had so far. According to ILO, cooperatives and social and solidarity economy institutions are responding decisively at the time of COVID. Financial cooperatives and credit unions are providing liquidity support to affected micro, small, and medium enterprises. In India the artisanal cooperatives sewing mask for earning their livelihood were at once earning their livelihood and protecting the lives of others. Cooperatives using infrastructure and networks act as catalysts for cooperation in communities, connecting people in need of support , working with local government and volunteers. Producers and consumers cooperatives often rise to the occasion to keep supplies of essentials such as food and other goods moving. Many are transporting goods and services to meet local urgent needs.

As such, it is in moments of crisis that we realise the pitfalls of the path of development that we have followed uncritically. The COVID-19 pandemic has called for a revival of not just solidarity at a global level, but solidarity at the community level. This is because it is at this level that people need to support each other and adopt policies that enable them to serve the immediate neighbourhood. While the solidarity economy idea has been coopted by some mainstream developmentalists as merely a reformist measure, others have said that it is only when people organise themselves to address their basic needs rather than being guided by the profit motive that the real benefits of such an economy will be reaped by the people.

When the great depression took place, everyone turned to Keynes for guidance. Now the time has come to turn our attention to Gandhi and the ideas that are ingrained in his *Hind Swaraj*. Ensuring food security and uninterrupted supply chains of essential goods is possible

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only when there are self-governing and self-sufficient panchayats. Since they are self-sufficient, the problem of migration of people from the rural areas to the urban ones is unlikely. The Covid-19 is a pandemic marked by class, gender and race and their effects are increasingly becoming visible. What is needed is an economic vision capable of creating relationships that sustain life, and not the market. This paradigm change requires education towards the care of life and the planet.

### **Conclusion**

Historically, whenever there is a crisis, be it financial or environmental such as famines, floods, earthquakes or an epidemic or pandemic, solidarity economy and Gandhian economic principles are revived as possible alternatives. This is applicable in the countries which followed neoliberal ideas, but with mixed success. For example, Greece's (anti middleman movement), Mexico's (Zapatista movement), Argentina's crisis (2001-02), global financial crisis (2007-08) were occasions when ideas relating to solidarity economy were invoked often to reform neoliberalism without renouncing it altogether. So in such cases solidarity economy principles have a short-term existence and no transformational potential. Similarly, it may sometime be used as just a tool for reviving the economy after the shock. There are three type of solidarity economy. One envisages a different development model based on localism, villagism and satisfaction of basic needs and it obviously is opposed to capitalism and industrialism. This is close to the Gandhian stream. The second is a reformist one, which thinks that capitalism can be reformed by bringing in elements of solidarity economics through cooperatives, small scale industries and microfinance. Most attempts to organise society along the line of solidarity economy fall within this category. Third is firmly wedded to capitalism but thinks that solidarities can be created within capitalism. The 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' is based on this logic. Gandhi believed that momentary virtue and solidarity at the time of disaster or calamities alone will be insufficient. If it sustains rather than being momentary, then it is a pure form of swaraj. Whenever there is an imbalance in the nature/system it prompts us to think of an alternative and our narrow mindedness results in short-term plans as if we are trying to treat cancer with a bandage. Balance is the keyword. Everything in the universe depends on balance; any imbalance will be followed by natural calamities like flood, drought, climate change etc. An economy dominated by materialism / individualism creates imbalances and call for spirituality or ethicality. Gandhian economy or solidarity economy is therefore the need of the time.

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72. In response to the questions raised by participants Gandhi "referred to Mr. Jevons' remark about the need for economist and said that it was said that dirt was matter misplaced. So also when an economist was misplaced, he was hurtful. He certainly thought that the economist had a place in the economy of nature when he occupied the humble sphere for which he was created. If an economist did not investigate the laws of God and show them how to distribute wealth so that there might not be poverty, he was a most unwelcome intrusion on the Indian soil. He would also suggest for the reflection of their economic students and professors that what might be good for England and America need not necessarily be good for India. He thought that most of the economic laws which were consistent with moral laws were of universal application, but there might be in their restricted application some distinction and difference. So he would utter the note of warning that Indian conditions being in some respects so essentially different from the English and American conditions, it was necessary to bring to bear on the matters that presented themselves to the economists a fresh mind. If they did so, both Indians

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# Community Policing and Homicide Cases in Kerala: An Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

*The Janamaithri Sureksha Project, the community policing initiative of Kerala Police, was started in 2008 with the primary objective of preventing crime in the society. Twelve years have lapsed since the launching of the programme and it is high time to make an assessment whether the projective is able to achieve its objectives. The paper analyses the association between community policing and reporting of homicide cases in Kerala. It compares the reporting pattern of murder cases before and after the introduction of community policing in the State.*

**Keywords:** crime, murder, homicide, community, janamaithri

CRIME HAS BEEN a baffling problem ever since the dawn of civilization and man's efforts to grapple with this problem have yielded only partial results. Emile Durkheim<sup>1</sup>, an eminent sociologist, pointed out that crime is a natural phenomenon which is constantly changing with the change in the social environment. There is no unanimity of opinion among scholars regarding the factors that cause crime in the society. Some of them support the endogenous theory of criminality which is founded on bio-physical consideration of criminals. A more plausible explanation for crime causation is that it is the interplay of a variety of factors like poverty, unemployment, broken – families, high school dropouts and a lot more. Though biological, anthropological and psychological factors play an important role in crime causation, they are so closely associated with the socio-cultural environment that there is an apparent need for a co-ordinated effort

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to tackle the problem of crime in the society. Community policing is widely considered as a philosophy which can be made use of to reduce the incidents of crime but its effectiveness depends upon a number of factors like social, cultural and political environment and the efficiency of law enforcement machinery. Crime rate has been used by the media, elected representatives, political parties, the intelligentsia, the academics and others to measure the effectiveness of their police departments and the quality of life in neighbourhoods. James Wilson stated that "crime in the street" is an issue of great importance and directly influences political decisions about policing styles. This limited measurement criteria have sustained a commitment to traditional police department practices and has hindered the implementation of community policing. In fact, the police are working in an environment in which it has no control over the social conditions prevailing in the society. In other words, police cannot create a favourable social condition easily to generate a crime index which is acceptable to all. But a reduction in the occurrence of crime and its clearance is considered as one of the primary responsibilities of the law enforcement machinery in the state.

#### CRIME AND CRIME CLEARANCE

The first and the foremost objective of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project* is to prevent crime<sup>3</sup>. The difference between traditional and community policing models is that in the former the efficiency of law enforcement machinery is measured by its ability to arrest and detention of criminals but in the later it is the absence of crime and disorder. The basic assumption is that increased police presence in the neighbourhood and continuous interaction between the police and the policed will lead to an absence or a reduction in the incidents of crime. As part of the community policing philosophy, the public continues to be recognized as the primary provider of information to the police. As the public – police relationship improves, the police will be in a better position to get more information from the public which will help not only to reduce crime but also to solve the crime. The community knows more about local and immediate crime risks. The police have the essential professional knowledge, because the police are the experts, however the community should support the police with appropriate information to deal with crime and criminals<sup>4</sup>. Some scholars argue that close partnership might cause less crime and generate more positive results<sup>5</sup>. According to Gultekin, there is a positive relationship between community partnership and crime clearance rates<sup>6</sup>. It is believed that police agencies with a higher community partnership scale have higher total crime clearance rates.

There is strong evidence which support that community policing improves citizen satisfaction with police. Research also supports that community policing decreases fear of crime among citizens. But the impact of community policing on aggregate crime trends is unconvincing and open to doubts. According to Greene, 'Community oriented policing sometimes have a limited impact on crime'<sup>7</sup>. But Zhao et al are of the view that the implementation of community policing in medium and large cities and towns contributed to significant reductions in both violent and property crimes<sup>8</sup>. In their micro-level study of community policing in Madison, Wisconsin, Wycoff and Skogan<sup>9</sup> conclude that organizational changes in support of community policing resulted in a decline in crime and fear of crime among citizens. According to Mazerolle, Kadleck and Roel, community policing has an effect on decreasing crime over time<sup>10</sup>. According to Mac Donald, community policing had little effect on the decline in violent crime rate<sup>11</sup>. Another group of scholars support the view that focused police practises can produce positive outcomes when targeted to specific crimes. In short, the literature on the effectiveness of community policing on aggregate crime trends remains inconclusive. Studies suggest that effectiveness of community policing can vary by type of crime, element of community policing activity and size of policing jurisdiction.

Crime clearance rate is calculated by dividing the number of crimes that are 'cleared' by the total number of crimes recorded. Clearance rates are used by various agencies as a measure to evaluate the performance of the police. A crime is considered to be solved or 'cleared' when an offender has been arrested, charged with commission of offence and turned over to the court for prosecution<sup>12</sup>. Most of the past research reported that the police investigation process is relatively ineffective and that only marginal improvements can be expected in future. Horvath, Meesig and Lee<sup>13</sup> reported that 22% of the agencies experienced a decline in clearance rates for serious crimes in the past ten years. The lack of time, too many crimes, non – cooperation of witnesses and lack of training are some of the factors responsible for low crime clearance rates.

Murder is the ultimate violence against humanity, i.e., taking away the life of a person. Every man, simply because of being born on earth, has the right to live with dignity and the legal statutes guarantee the right to life to all and this cannot be taken away except according to procedure established by law. A reduction in the reporting of the violent crimes is the manifestation of the effectiveness of the law enforcement machinery of the State.

**METHODOLOGY**

The State of Kerala is divided into nineteen police districts. No serious study was conducted earlier covering all the Districts to find out the impact of community policing on the reporting of homicide cases in the State. The author selected one police station each from the police districts on the basis of well-defined parameters for the purpose of the study. The police stations were selected from cities, towns and rural areas; heavy, medium and light police stations in terms of reporting of crimes and law and order; communally and politically sensitive police stations; police stations bordering other states; stations known for successful implementations of the project and those which show a low profile towards it; stations bordering the coastal areas; stations known for the activities of extremist elements, etc. Two tribal police stations were also selected for the study. The objective is to get a representative sample of the police stations in the state. The selection was done after extensive discussions with senior officers and different stakeholders of community policing. The *Janamaithri Suraksha Project* in the State was implemented in a phased manner starting with 20 police stations in 2008, 23 in 2009, 105 in 2010 and 100 in 2013. It was extended to all the police stations in Kerala in 2017. Police stations were selected from all the five phases. From the first phase, five police stations, viz, Paravoor, Adoor, Irinjalakkuda, Perinthalmanna and Payyannur were selected and crime details are collected from 2003 to 2018. Medical College, Nadakkavu, Thrissur East and Mananthavady police stations were selected from the second phase and data collected is from 2004 to 2018. Data from 2005 to 2018 is collected from the third phase and the police stations selected are Punalur, Nadapuram and Mannarkad. The fourth phase is implemented in 2013 and four police stations such as Mundakkayam, Kumily, Neeleswaram and Kalamassery were selected and studied from 2008 to 2018. The period of study of the police stations from the last phase is very short, i.e., from 2012 to 2018 and three police stations, viz, Pothencode, Vallikunnam and Nedumbassery were selected from the last phase. The study compares the reporting and detection of cases in the selected police stations before and after the implementation of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project*. Five years prior to the implementation of the project is taken to analyse the reporting and detection pattern before the introduction of community-oriented policing in the State. The data for the paper is collected from the FIR index<sup>14</sup>, Key books<sup>15</sup> and inspection notes<sup>16</sup> maintained in the police stations. Crime details are also collected from the District Crime Records Bureau<sup>17</sup>(DCRB), State Crime Records Bureau<sup>18</sup>(SCRB) and National Crime Records Bureau<sup>19</sup>

(NCRB). The collected data is analysed and tabulated with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences.

## **MURDER**

Among all the offences, homicide is the most important one, because it forcefully brings to an end the very existence of a human being on earth. Homicide/murder literally means the killing of a human being by another human being. From the time of creation of man, the killing of one by another has been causing greatest sensation in the community. Causing the death of one human being by another is considered as the greatest injury that one can possibly do towards another. Murder is the unlawful killing of another human without justification or valid excuse, especially the unlawful killing of another human with malice aforethought<sup>20</sup>. Murder is the ultimate violence against humanity and most societies are in favour of awarding harsh punishments including death penalty to offenders.

According to Indian Penal Code, except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder<sup>21</sup>

1. If the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or
2. If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused, or
3. If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death or
4. If person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability, cause death or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury as aforesaid.

Exceptions: Culpable homicide is not murder

1. If an offender causes the death of a person on sudden provocation or causes the death of any other person by mistake or accident.
2. If the offender in exercise of his right of defence of person or property causes the death of a person.
3. If a public servant causes death of a person in exercise of his lawful functions in good faith.
4. If it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion.
5. When the person whose death is caused being above the age of 18 years suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.



**HOMICIDE CASES FROM 2003-2018**

According to the report of World Health Organisation released in 2002, in every 60 second a murder occurs in the world<sup>22</sup>. It is much higher in African and Latin-American countries. As per the data released by the National Crime Records Bureau, 78.5 murder happens in every day in India<sup>23</sup>. The situation is different in Kerala. The State recorded only 5762 murder cases during a span of 16 years<sup>24</sup>, (2003-2018) (5840 days) i.e., below one murder per day in the State. The total number of murder cases reported from all the nineteen police stations during the study period is 209. Eighty-two cases were reported before and 127 cases after the implementation of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project*.

The Table (No. I) shows that there is no significant difference in the reporting of murder cases before and after the implementation of the scheme. But the reporting pattern is not uniform in all the police stations. There is a slight reduction of cases in Paravoor, Irinjalakkuda, Medical College, Thrissur East, Mannarkad, Kumily, Neeleswaram, Kalamassery, Pothencode, Vallikunnam and Nedumbassery. But Adoor, Perinthalmanna, Payyannur, Nadakkavu, Mananthavady, Punalur, Nadapuram and Mundakkayam showed an upward trend. In Paravoor, six cases were registered within a short span of five years from 2003 to 2007, i.e., period before the implementation of the project. Eleven cases were reported from 2008 to 2018. The largest number of cases recorded is in 2015. The station recorded three cases in 2015. The station is free from this most important crime in 2006, 2013, 2014 and 2018. In Irinjalakkuda, there is a remarkable reduction in this head under *Janamaithri* policing. Out of the 15 cases only eight cases were registered after the implementation of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project*. The station is free from homicide in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2016 and 2018. During the second phase, Medical College and Thrissur East have lower reporting compared to the previous years. In Medical College only eight cases were registered during the period from 2003 to 2018 out of these four instances were happened in the pre-implementation phase. In Thrissur East, there is absence of this most violent crime in a number of years such as 2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2018. In Mannarkad, out of 24 cases only 12 cases are reported in the post-implementation phase. The largest decline can be seen in Kumily, Neeleswaram, Pothencode and Nedumbassery. Four out of six in Kumily, eight out of six in Neeleswaram, six out of seven in Pothencode and three out of four cases in Nedumbassery were registered before the inception of community policing. Cases have more than halved in the above stations in the post implementation

Table No. I - HOMICIDE CASES REPORTED IN THE SELECTED POLICE STATIONS

Sl No.	Police Station	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
1	Paravoor	2	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	17
2	Adoor	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	4	0	3	1	22
3	Irinjalakuda	1	2	0	2	2	1	0	0	2	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	15
4	Perinthalmanna	0	2	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	0	0	2	3	0	2	2	21
5	Payyannur	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	3	2	0	16
6	Medical College	-	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	8
7	Nadakkavu	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	4
8	Thrissur East	-	1	0	2	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	14
9	Mananthavady	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	6
10	Punalur	-	-	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	5	0	2	1	2	1	1	17
11	Nadapuram	-	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4
12	Mannarkad	-	-	2	1	1	4	4	0	4	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	24
13	Mundakkayam	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	6
14	Kumily	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
15	Neeleswaram	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
16	Kalamassery	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	9
17	Pothencode	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	3	1	0	1	0	7
18	Vallikunnam	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
19	Nedumpassery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
<b>Grand Total</b>																		
<b>209</b>																		

Source: Data collected from the selected police stations

\*Shaded area represents pre-implementation phase

phase. There are no homicide cases in Vallikunnam during the *Janamaithri phase*. But 68% of the cases in Adoor, 76% in Perinthalmanna, 75% each in Payyannur, Nadapuram and Nadakkavu, 83 % in Mananthavady, 82 % in Punalur and 83 % cases in Mundakkayam are reported after the implementation of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project*. The period covered under the post implementation phase is much higher than the pre-implementation phase. In Nadakkavu even though the cases have increased in the post implementation phase, the station is free from murder for a long time. There are no murder cases in this station in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018<sup>25</sup>.

It should be noted that no homicide cases were reported in Payyannur, Medical College, Nadakkavu, Thrissur East, Mananthavady, Nadapuram and Vallikunnam during the year of implementation of the project. There is also a great decline in the incidents of murder in Paravoor, Irinjalakkuda and Neeleswaram in the year of launching. The reporting pattern is not constant and fluctuations can be seen in almost all the police stations. For example, in Mannarkad, there are two instances in 2005 followed by one each in 2006 and 2007, jumped to four each in 2008 and 2009, no cases in 2010, again leaped to four in 2011, one each in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, no case in 2016 followed by two cases each in 2017 and 2018. Similarly, in Pothencode, two cases were registered in 2012, free from murder in 2013, improved to three in 2014, declined to one in 2015, no case in 2016, one in 2017 and no case in 2018. These ups and downs can be seen in almost all the police stations selected for the study. The largest number of murder cases reported is in Mannarkad followed by Adoor and Perinthalmanna. In Mannarkad there are 22 cases within a short span of 9 years, i.e., more than two cases in a year. But there is a slight decrease in the incidents of homicide cases under community policing programme in Mannarkad<sup>26</sup>. Even though there are ups and downs in the reporting of murder cases, the change is not significant.

The table (*No. II*) below shows that the reporting of murder cases is decreasing in almost all the districts. The number of such cases in Thiruvananthapuram Rural in 2003 is 40, declined to 21 in 2018. The figure touched 45 in 2014 after that it shows a continuous decline. In Kollam City, 36 incidents were occurred, the largest number in 2007 followed by a reduction except in 2010. Only 6 cases were recorded in 2018. Similar trends can be seen in Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta, Kollam Rural, Kottayam, Ernakulam City, Idukki, Ernakulam Rural, Thrissur City, Thrissur Rural, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode City, Wayanad and Kasaragod. Palakkad recorded the highest number of homicide cases ever registered in a district in one year. In 2003, the

District recorded 52 such cases followed by 34 cases in 2004 and 39 cases in 2005. There is ups and downs in the district up to 2010. After that one can notice a gradual and continuous downward trend except in 2011. Only Thiruvananthapuram City, Kozhikode Rural and Kannur have more homicide cases in 2018 compared to 2003. In Thiruvananthapuram, only 10 cases were reported in 2003 improved to 15 in 2018. Similarly, there is an increase of three cases in Kozhikode Rural from 2003 to 2018 and in Kannur the cases increased from 13 in 2003 to 18 in 2018.

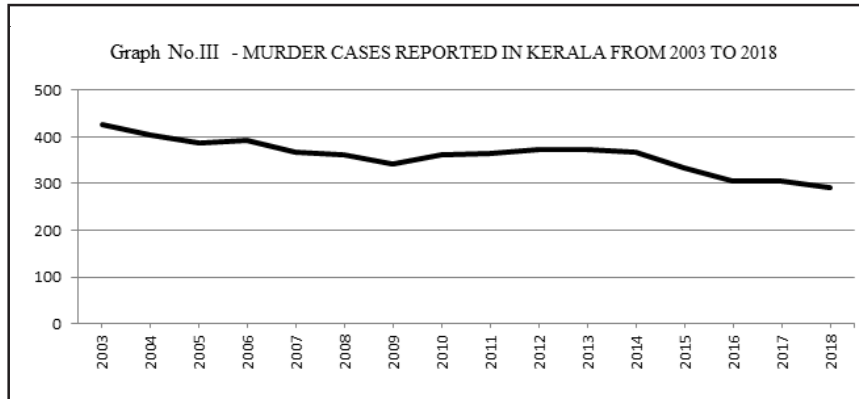
An analysis of the district trends further revealed that in three out of five districts where the project was implemented in the first phase showed a sharp decline in the occurrence of murder cases compared to the previous years. In Kollam City, it came down from 43 to 26, Pathanamthitta 21 to 17 and Thrissur Rural 39 to 38 in the year of implementation. At the same time, in other two districts, viz, Malappuram and Kannur the figures shoot up from 22 to 29 and 14 to 26 respectively. In the second phase, cases declined in Thrissur City and Wayanad in the year of implementation compared to the previous years. But there is a slight increase of cases in Thiruvananthapuram City and Kozhikode City. The three police stations selected for the study during the third phase is from Kollam Rural, Kozhikode City and Palakkad. Out of the three Districts, Kozhikode Rural showed a great decline in the incidents compared to the previous year. Similar trends can be seen in the fourth phase also. In the last phase, cases have come down in Thiruvananthapuram City and Ernakulam Rural in the year of implementation compared to previous year. But Alappuzha recorded an increase in the incidents of homicide cases in 2017.

It is also desirable to examine the crime trends after the implementation of the project in all the police stations in Kerala. The project was extended to the entire police stations in the beginning of 2017. In twelve districts<sup>27</sup> viz Thiruvananthapuram City, Thiruvananthapuram Rural, Kollam City, Kollam Rural, Kottayam, Ernakulam Rural, Thrissur Rural, Malappuram, Kozhikode Rural, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod the cases have decreased compared to 2016. The districts which showed an increasing trend are Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Alappuzha, Ernakulam City, Thrissur City, Palakkad and Kozhikode City. Homicide rate is the lowest in Kozhikode City followed by Thrissur Rural and Kozhikode Rural. Kozhikode City recorded only 128 cases during a span of 16 years. But the figure of Palakkad for the corresponding period is 538 cases. The figures of Thrissur Rural and Kozhikode Rural for the above period is 160 and 167 cases respectively.

TABLE NO. II - DISTRICT WISE STATISTICS OF MURDER CASES FROM 2002 TO 2019

Sl.No.	Police Station	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
1	Tvm City	10	15	9	16	15	10	12	15	8	14	12	13	9	15	13	15		
2	Tvm Rural	40	39	31	28	27	35	27	42	32	42	44	45	34	28	27	21		
3	Kollam City	36	47	42	35	43	26	34	40	14	21	16	10	18	16	10	16		
4	Kollam Rural	District was separated as City & Rural in 2011										29	30	19	28	16	18	22	26
5	PTA	28	18	22	20	21	17	15	19	20	28	25	11	14	12	30	16		
6	ALPY	23	18	24	28	20	8	20	27	22	20	19	19	22	14	19	12		
7	Kottayam	19	19	24	21	17	26	19	17	25	20	25	17	21	22	10	15		
8	Idukki	29	35	26	31	24	15	19	15	20	22	21	20	17	10	20	18		
9	EkM City	22	14	15	14	14	9	12	4	15	9	7	13	11	10	11	12		
10	EkM Rural	27	32	25	29	26	36	34	25	26	21	23	19	21	25	17	16		
11	Trissur City	39	43	41	46	39	38	23	30	8	9	19	17	6	5	11	11		
12	Trissur Rural	District was separated as City & Rural in 2011										24	18	13	24	19	24	23	15
13	Palakkad	52	34	39	44	42	34	36	42	41	32	25	23	27	21	27	19		
14	MLPM	18	23	28	19	22	29	24	14	13	16	25	19	15	25	18	18		
15	Kkd City	14	8	11	8	10	6	5	7	5	7	13	8	8	3	7	8		
16	Kkd Rural	8	9	6	7	10	15	19	16	12	9	8	9	15	8	5	11		
17	Wynad	22	11	9	9	11	12	9	15	11	10	19	9	7	10	4	12		
18	Kannur	13	23	26	23	14	26	14	26	20	32	19	22	21	22	20	18		
19	Kasargod	24	14	10	15	12	19	20	8	19	14	18	16	16	12	11	11		
	TOTAL	424	402	388	393	367	361	342	362	364	374	370	342	317	300	305	290		

Source: Data collected from State Crime Records Bureau



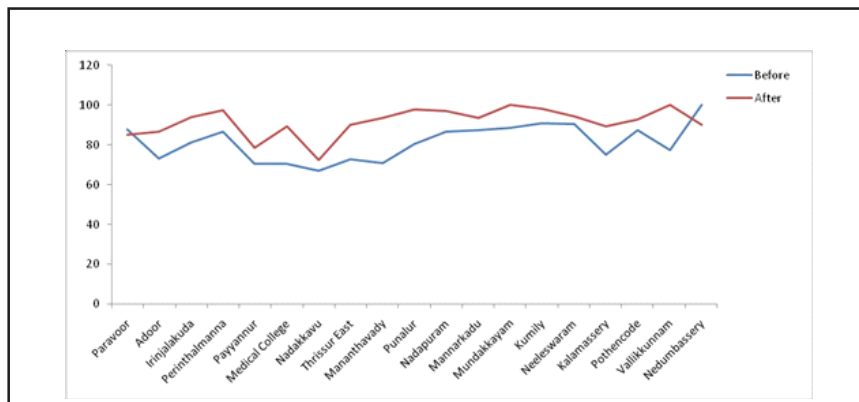
Source: Data collected from State Crime Records Bureau

The graph (No.III) shows that the State recorded 5762 homicide cases from 2003 to 2018. A descending trend can be seen in the incidents of the ultimate criminal act of man in Kerala. The largest number of cases recorded is in 2003, i.e., 427 cases. In the next year, there is 6.2 % reduction in the incidents of murder with 405 cases. A further decrease can be seen in 2005 with 388 cases. But the year 2006 witnessed an increase of 1.2 % in the registration of homicide cases. From 2007 to 2009, the figures gradually declined and in 2010 the cases come down to 363. But in the next year, there is an increase of two cases compared to 2010. After 2012, there is a steady decline in the reporting of cases and the year 2018 witnessed the lowest ever reported murder cases in the State. The total cases reported in the State including Railways and Crime Branch in 2018 is 292. This is a great achievement in the contemporary world where newer and newer forms of crimes come in the lime light and human beings act callously towards their fellow-beings and the criminals adopt sophisticated techniques to get rid of their enemies. In almost all the crime heads like burglary, economic offences, bodily offences, and offences against women including children, the figures have multiplied several times from 2003 to 2018. But compared to 2003, there is a reduction of 31.7% murder cases in 2018. There is a belief among the people of the State that Kerala Police is one of the best in the world and in the sphere of investigation it excels even the Scotland Yard. It is very difficult for a person to escape from the frog's eye of Kerala Police if one kills a fellow human being. Though the total cases remained the same after the implementation of the scheme in all the police stations in 2017, there is a marginal reduction in this most important head in 2018. Eleven out of nineteen selected police stations and eleven districts

showed lower reporting of homicide cases after the introduction of community-oriented policing in all the police stations. Thus, community policing can be used to create a favourable crime index in this most important crime head.

### MURDER CLEARANCE

Graph No. IV - PERCENTAGE OF DETECTION OF MURDER CASES BEFORE AND AFTER JANAMAITHRI



Source: Data collected from the selected police stations

The graph (No. IV) shows that the percentage of detection of cases increased in community policing. The total cases reported from all the 19 police stations selected for the study is 209 of which 207 cases are solved. The clearance rate for the entire period of study is 99%. A total of 82 cases were reported in the pre-implementation phase of which 81 cases are cleared. The clearance rate during the period is 98.7%. Hundred and twenty-seven cases were reported during the community policing phase of which 126 cases were detected and the detection rate during this period is 99.2% which is slightly higher than the pre-implementation phase. In the pre-implementation phase, Adoor Police station has failed to clear all the murder cases reported in the police station in 2007. Similarly, in the post implementation phase, Mananthavady police is not able to detect one of the homicide cases reported in 2018<sup>28</sup>. Thus, all the police stations except Adoor in the pre-implementation phase and Mananthavady in the post implementation phase achieved 100% clearance rate in this most important crime head. Ninety-nine percent clearance in homicide is an outstanding achievement compared to the national and

international average. The state cleared 98.6% in 2017 and 97.9% in 2018 of all the murder cases recorded. It is also very high compared to national and international figures<sup>29</sup>. The clearance rate of homicide in Finland, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland in 2014 is 98.2%, 69.9%, 82.2% and 93.8% respectively<sup>30</sup>. This shows the efficiency of the law enforcement machinery of the State in detecting the ultimate crime against human beings.

The reasons for this excellent clearance rate are not far to seek. Kerala Police consider all murder cases as serious because it takes away the precious life of an innocent human being. The people of Kerala are also against killing of a person and they provide every available information to the police and work with the police in nabbing the accused. A lot of murder cases in the State were detected on the basis of the tips given by the general public. The researcher is instrumental in solving a sensational murder case on the basis of confidential information supplied by a layman. The undetected murder cases in the State is only very few. This is because the police pool its entire resources including setting up of special investigation teams immediately after the incident. The scientific investigation wing is fully used to collect scientific evidence from the scene of crime. Co-operation of the people is also ensured in the process. As a result, the police solved almost all the murder cases reported in the State including those which have no eye-witnesses. The conviction rate of murder also par excellence other categories of crimes.

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that there is no uniform pattern in the reporting of cases before and after the implementation of *Janamaithri Suraksha Project* in Kerala. The study found that the total crime cases are increasing in almost all the police stations taken up for study. In some police stations like Payyannur, a manifold increase in the number of cases can be noticed. Here, the total cases have increased from 471 in 2006 to 2043 in 2016. Similar trends can be seen in many other police stations like Thrissur East, Irinjalakkuda and Paravoor. In the State, the total cases have continuously increased from 2003 to 2016 and earned the distinction of being the most crime prone state in India. The crime trends in the State further revealed that even though the total cognizable cases have shown an upward trend, some serious crimes like murder is on the decline. The study revealed that in almost all the districts, the homicide cases have decreased. The total murder cases in the State have come down from 427 in 2003 to 292 in 2018, a reduction of 135 cases compared to 2003. The study also revealed that in contrast to crime reduction expectations, some of the crimes have



increased in community policing. In Kerala, violent crimes like robbery and murder showed a slight reduction in reporting while sexual offences against women increased after the implementation of community-oriented policing in the State. The findings of the study indicate that community policing can be used to get a favourable crime clearance rate, especially violent crimes. Community partnership, which brings more interaction between police and community might cause more information flow from citizens to police and helps police to clear more crimes. A slight improvement can be seen in the detection of murder cases under *Janamaithri* policing. Total clearance rate of murder for the entire period of study is 99%. The clearance rate under this head in the pre-implementation phase is 98.7% where as in the post-implementation phase it rose to 99.2% which is higher than the period before the introduction of community-oriented policing. But it should be noted that the effectiveness of community policing cannot be evaluated by considering the number of cases reported alone. As community policing is based on building close partnership between the police and the policed, reduction in fear of crime and citizen-satisfaction may be more reasonable indicators of effectiveness of community policing.

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15. Key books are being maintained by station writers to locate the details of cases easily. It is organised crime-wise such as murder, robbery, dacoity, rape etc.
16. Inspection notes are prepared and presented to superior officers at the time of inspection of the police station. It is an authoritative record.
17. District Crime Records Bureau collects and compiles the details of all the cases reported in a district.
18. State Crime Records Bureau collects the details of cases reported from each and every district and compile crime data for the whole state.
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26. Ibid.
27. As against the revenue districts, there are 19 police districts in the State. Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Kozhikode is divided into City and Rural to make the number of districts to 19.
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## *Book Reviews*

**Suman Khanna Aggarwal, *The Science of Peace* (New Delhi: Shanti Sahyog Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution, 2019), with a foreword by Richard A Falk ISBN:978-81-7139-738-9, pp.170, Price Rs. 699**

In his foreword to the book, Richard Falk says that the author “highlights in an original and illuminating manner the importance of Gandhi’s fundamental belief that politics and transformative change are subjects of ‘science’ and should not be treated as questions of feelings and sentiments untestable by the laws of life”. This book by a Gandhian scholar is organized into four sections and spread over twelve chapters. The first section looks at the meaning of conflict, violence and war, the second deals with science and practice of nonviolence, the third is focused on satyagraha or the Gandhian method of nonviolent action and final section discusses the idea of people’s power. In the first chapter, Suman Khanna compares incompatibilities arising from conflict to different perceptions of truth exemplified by the Jain principle of *anekantavada*. She discusses different kinds of violence. In addition to direct, structural and cultural violence, there is reference to subtle, mental, sexual and spiritual violence. In chapter three, the author discusses the causes and consequences of war. The role played by military-industrial complex, the logic of deterrence, nationalism of a jingoist kind, religious fundamentalism and individual war mongering as systems which prop up war are dealt with in the chapter. The author thinks that change should begin with introspection.

In chapter four, the author defines nonviolence and discusses why it deserves to be called a science. In the next chapter, she examines why one should choose nonviolence and the principles that are commonly followed in nonviolent action. Chapter six focuses on the principled and strategic forms of nonviolence. Chapter seven is on the meaning and origins of Satyagraha. The chapter that follows makes

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an analysis of salt Satyagraha. Then, there is a discussion on Satya. While discussing power in the section on people's power paradigm, the author should have looked at its relationship with consent and the contributions of people like Gene Sharp to illustrate it. Also, a treatment on Gandhi's understanding of generating parallel power built on self-less service as a check on extant power holders would have been useful. There is a chapter on *Shanti Sena* as an alternative to military defence. The book's final chapter deals with strategies to go beyond violence and war.

The book has also several pictorial illustrations which add to greater comprehension of the author's ideas. There is also a personal side to the book because the author tries to provide an account of her own experiences in organizing workshops on nonviolence. Occasionally, one gets a feeling that the author is also trying to highlight the activities of the organization committed to peace and nonviolence to which the author belongs. There is also considerable repetition of ideas. One cannot be very fussy about it beyond a point given the highly inter-related manner in which Gandhian ideas are strewn together. There are some problems relating to the organization of the materials in different chapters. Some well known commentators on Gandhi like Bhikhu Parekh, Anthony Parel, Jean Bondurant, Paul Wehr, Mark Jurgensmeyer and proponents of nonviolence like Michael Nagler, Stephen Zunes and Brian Martin have not found a place in the book. The book nonetheless covers considerable ground, and would be a boon for students, particularly for those who would like to take notes since a substantial part of the material is available in bullet format.

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# An Erudite Gandhian Scholar: Remembering Ramashray Roy (1927-2020)<sup>1</sup>

*Ravi Ranjan*

BORN IN THE remote district of Darbhanga in Bihar in 1923, Professor Ramashray Roy travelled to Allahabad to complete his post-graduation in Political Science. After obtaining his master's degree, he joined a rural high school in Bihar as its head master for a very short stint. After overcoming his home-sickness, he decided to leave for USA to pursue his doctoral studies from University of California, Berkeley (UCB), where he had an opportunity to be trained by well-known political philosophers like Professor Sheldon S. Wolin, one of his favourite teachers, who gifted him a signed copy of his classic *Politics and Vision* for scoring good grades in his papers at UCB. Prof Roy cherished these intellectual associations and often became nostalgic while talking about his USA days. As a staunch believer of one's duty towards homeland, Dr. Roy was reluctant about settling abroad after concluding his doctoral studies unlike many of his peers who decided to work and stay there, which was a preferred trend in those days.

Professor Roy had a fascinating intellectual voyage of more than six decades; he authored more than three dozen books and about six dozen articles in reputed Indian and international journals. It's really challenging to decode the intellectual journey of Professor Ramashray Roy whose wide range of writings include voters behaviour to Vedic philosophy, and policy studies to politics of spiritual psychology. For ease of readers, his major writings can be placed in three thematical phases of his academic odyssey, first as a passionate psephologist, second as a policy researcher and third as

- 
1. I express my gratitude to Smt. Indira Roy, President, Ramashray Roy Foundation, New Delhi, for her inputs related to Professor Roy's personal life and professional associations with different institutions across the globe.

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a pristine political philosopher. Soon after joining Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), as one of its founding members in early 1960s on invitation of the doyen of political science Professor Rajni Kothari, the founding director of CSDS, Prof. Roy as a passionate psephologist studied state and national elections during 1960s and 1970s and tried to make sense of Indian democracy from a distinct perspective by understanding the cultural and social rootedness of voters. The *Uncertain Verdict* (1973) was an outcome of how such community quotients affect decisions of voters. After analysing voters choices, he delved deeper into understanding how policies impact citizens' choices, his books like *Economy, Democracy and the State: The Indian Experience* were authored from this perspective. He wrote extensively on bureaucracy, decentralization and economic development during this phase. Simultaneously, in the early 1980s he started writing on the dominance of western philosophical traditions and their influence on Indian thinking. He engaged himself in mapping the development of Indian theorisation from ancient times to modern era by converging modernity and tradition; in this, exploration Gandhi was a natural choice.

In addition to authoring several books on Gandhi, Prof Roy contributed numerous articles to *Gandhi Marg* throughout his long association with this peer reviewed reputed international journal as member of its editorial board. These well researched articles are widely quoted as they have successfully created a novel perspective on Gandhi. Few of these articles have generated global debates too. Way back in 2000, Professor Nicholas F Gier has written a long article on "Gandhi, the Buddha, and *Atman*: A Response to Ramashray Roy" in *Gandhi Marg*. Prof. Gier started his piece by acknowledging that over the years, Professor Roy has established himself as one of India's leading political theorists. He has developed a very keen understanding of European philosophy and has a good grasp of contemporary critiques of liberal political theory. He further says, Roy has ably defended traditional approaches to ideas of self and society and has offered many insights into Gandhi's philosophy. Prof Gier was sure that many others will join him in confessing that they have learnt much from Prof. Roy.

Searching the essence of life was a perennial question before Roy, so he moved beyond the contractual system of human social order and started seeking answers in Indian tradition and there he found Gandhi as a creative alternative. He decided to revisit Gandhi as a distinctive political philosopher from a different perspective. He contextualized the goals, progress and indicators of development from a Gandhian perspective with the help of the United Nations University (UNU). The outcome of this churning of ideas and approaches was *Self and Society: A Study in Gandhian Thought* (1984) jointly published by Sage and UNU. He also taught at UNU for few years. This turn towards Gandhi was by default and not by design but it developed into a deeper thought process and found a seamless connection with the ideas of world order, modernity, democracy and human well-being, which are reflected in his later writings on Gandhi. He authored seven books on Gandhi and each one of them tried to convert the divergences of approaches into convergences of alternatives available to understand and provide

solutions to problems of mankind.

In his various writings on Gandhi, Prof. Roy tried to answer a long pending question, why Gandhi? He suggests that we need to understand Gandhi not only as a political thinker but more as a person who had an alternative model of development and a parallel epistemological intervention to the well-practised ideas of modernity in social sciences. Therefore, in his *Understanding Gandhi* Prof. Roy argues that there are diversity of approaches to read Gandhi. However, in order to be useful, Gandhi must be 'deontologised'. He says, Gandhi did possess, to use a Platonic usage, a 'sharp sightedness' which enabled him to penetrate deeper into the social roots of this country and into the structures of order. There is a need to use a framework which is grounded in the indubitable fact that Gandhi was a wise man and a lover, par excellence of wisdom, and if the love of wisdom is philosophy (both in Platonic and traditional Indian sense), then, Gandhi was undoubtedly a philosopher irrespective of whether or not he employed philosopher's tool to construct the edifice of his thought. For Prof. Roy, Gandhi was primarily concerned with curing the soul of its corruption and, through it, overcoming society's corruption.

Every society must learn and unlearn from the structures of governance through democratic means in order to ensure citizens' well-being; that is why Prof. Roy till his last years was focusing his intellectual gaze on linkages of democracy and development. He was reflecting on what happens when the cosmic order gives way to earthly order and how modernism, democracy and well-being are interlinked conceptually and theoretically. He attempted to find some answers to these foundational questions in his last book on *Gandhi Essays on Modernism, Democracy and Well-Being* (2016:Sage) by exploring Gandhian alternative to modernism and democracy in contemporary times. Roy feels that society has been driven by a psychological impulse to make human destiny secure from want, disease, ignorance and other afflictions since the beginning of human civilization. Yet the new order that promised to create heaven on the earth has proved highly deficient in doing so. Therefore, such an order needs to be questioned.

Through a constant dialogical process, Prof Roy analysed the possibility of development for all by unravelling the Gandhian model, by using philosophical understanding of triangular relationship of nature, self and community. He tried to construct a Gandhian version of a desirable society by transcending the purely intellectual and analytical categories dominated by behaviouristic perspectives. For Roy, Gandhi had his own perspective and analytical categories which he employed to build a coherent, organically-linked structure of thought. This perspective enabled Gandhi to select ideas to articulate or support his own central thesis. It's high time we investigate the tyranny of progress and pursuit of liberty versus liberation. The promise of human emancipation from sufferings and misery and their liberation from ignorance has turned sour despite a commitment to overcome the modern predicament by enlightenment. Therefore, Prof Roy argued, it was necessary to address the aspects of civilization-related crisis that we face today.

In his *Gandhi and Ambedkar: A Study In Contrast*, Roy argued that existing



studies of these founding fathers suffer from grievous faults due to their rejection of philosophical rational language while dealing with their deep rooted concerns of just order. He commented on most of such attempts by quoting Eric Voegelin “in order to be heard he would have to be a partisan himself, and in order to become a partisan he would have to surrender the standard of rationality”, which Prof Roy found problematic throughout his career.

As a pristine philosopher in many ways, Roy inspires us to realize our academic aspirations through the exploration of the collective epistemological journey by deploying our own philosophical consciousness, that Professor Ramashray Roy believed in, throughout his academic life.

Adieu Prof. Roy, bless us to follow the *gyan marg* you have shown and to keep the knowledge flame burning.

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#### Examples

Books: Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.23.

Articles: Ramashray Roy, "Parameters of Participation", *Gandhi Marg*, 12, 3 (October-December 1990), p.276.

Chapters within Books: Pearl S. Buck, "A Way of Living", in S. Radhakrishnan, ed., *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1956), p.51.

Internet Citations: Apart from name of author and article, include also the URL and date of download. For example: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) accessed on 10 May 2006.

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