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Editorial

MEDIATION, OR DISPUTE resolution outside the court system, was one of the themes dear to the Mahatma, who could rightfully be called the father of alternative dispute resolution in India. The sensitive yet successful resolution of the Ayodhya dispute through mediation by the Supreme Court of India has highlighted the value of mediation. Mediation can be used to repair ruptured human relationships and facilitate the resolution of disputes where one or both the parties lack the capacity for direct negotiations. They relieve the courts from the current overload of civil cases, leading to excessive delay in the disposal of justice. It will also give the disputants some control over the dispute, which is lost when they resort to litigation. The draft mediation bill 2021 published by the central government for comments and suggestions is thus a long-felt need coming to fruition. The bill speaks about institutional mediation for resolving disputes, providing a body for the registration of mediators, encouraging community mediation, and making online mediation an acceptable and cost-effective process. The bill seeks to grant mediation settlements the status of an order, judgment, and decree besides establishing the Mediation Council of India and recognizing mediation service providers. It also makes way for mediation institutes that provide training, continuous education, and certification.

People are inclined to the adversarial process by default. The attitude towards arbitration has changed in the last two decades following the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. Mediation should not just be seen as a form of alternative dispute resolution, but a primary one, and courts should ask parties to resort to it before litigation, wherever possible. Encouraging mediation may well be the way forward for ensuring speedy delivery of justice.

To take full advantage of the mediation service, it is essential to spread awareness about it, especially among the poor, who are severely constrained to approach the courts for justice. Those engaged in mediation must acquire mediation skills in a scientific and

structured way. However, the legal cloak that gripped much of the earlier initiatives, such as *lok adalats* and the fledgling *gram nyayalayas* seemed to have influenced the bill, making the mediation service a haven for lawyers. Instead, people who have studied conflict resolution and mediation within a non-legal framework focusing on problem-solving skills, including social workers, should also be involved in mediation attempts.

This journal issue has five articles in the main section, two short articles in the section on notes and comments, and two book reviews. The first article is by Nishant Kumar on Gandhi's deontological framework and the importance of Bhagavad Gita. The second, rather lengthy, article by Jos Chathukulam and his colleagues at the Centre for Rural Management is on Mission Antyodaya, on which hardly any material is available. The third article by Biju Lekshmanan and Dileep Chandran is on Savarkar's encounter with Gandhi on violence. The following article by Preeti Singh is an examination of the culture of dialogue from a Gandhian perspective. The final article in this section by Ananya Behera looks at Odisha's influence on Gandhi. There are also two shorter articles by Ary Waldir Ramos Díaz on Pope Francis and Gandhi, translated from Spanish by Peter Gonsalves, and Heramb Chaturvedi's piece on the Gandhian concept of education. We hope this array of papers will provide the readers with enough material for intellectual stimulation.

JOHN S. MOOLAKKATTU
Chief Editor

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Gandhi's Deontological Framework and the Importance of *Bhagavad Gita*

Nishant Kumar

ABSTRACT

Commentators have credited Gita in developing a deep sense about politics in Gandhi that exhibited itself in the ideas like ahimsa and satyagraha. However, I argue in this paper that the most fundamental contribution of Gita on Gandhi has been in developing a deontological framework that provided the basis for moral judgment in everyday life. The stress on karmayoga as action devoid of interest in fruits and stithprajna as a figure, who has conquered desires and emotions, forms the philosophical basis for this framework. It is this framework that helped Gandhi build upon some of his core ideas- for example, his insistence that satyagraha was not only a political means to swaraj but rather a way of life. This also explains his insistence on the integral relationship between religion and politics, as well as the focus on ethical means rather than ends. He would see Arjuna in each one of us who is constantly in a state of dilemma in choices we make in everyday life and Gita, according to him, shows us the path to enlightenment. He not only devises the principles on which the moral dilemmas could be overcome, rather also suggests ways in which the principles can become part of practice, thereby rendering every act to be moral.

Key words: deontology, Bhagavad Gita, Gandhi, moral action, karmayoga

Introduction

BHAGAVAD GITA ENJOYS a very unique position in Indian philosophy and, as a result, also inspired more interpretative controversy, than any other religious scripture in India. For example,

religious scholars like *Sankara*, *Ramanuja*, and *Madhva*, the proponents of *Advaita*, *Visistadvaita*, and *Dvaita* philosophies respectively, interpreted the text based on their own prejudices and preconceptions to find justifications for their own religious and philosophical positions.[1] The context in which Gandhi deeply engaged with the text is significant because in early twentieth century, Gita was widely interpreted by nationalists both as kernel of Indian philosophy and "as the political and social gospel of Hindu India."[2]. These interpretations, unlike those by *Shankara* and others, was not interested in the textual discourse, rather aimed at rediscovering the text to serve the cause of national regeneration, and support nationalist movement. As D. MacKenzie Brown has observed, one text that was considered eminently suited to this role was the Bhagavad Gita as "It was authoritative ….; it was popular ….; it stressed the doctrine of *Karmayoga* (action) - insisting upon the warrior's duty to fight"[3]. Gita was presented as a nationalist text for national regeneration that had potential to arise and awake masses to the service of nation. If the earlier interpretations of Gita saw it as suggesting the path of renunciation of action for *moksha*, most twentieth century interpreters held it as an affirmation for action. In the process, the mantra of *karma yoga* or selfless action, as advocated in Gita, was creatively used to argue that it was the *dharma* (duty) of every individual to struggle for the nation's independence. It was held that fighting for independence was nothing less than *dharmayudh*, as in the Mahabharata- the battle between good and the evil- which eventually would end in the defeat of the evil forces and lead to nation's independence. Political action, as a form of *karma yoga*, was used by many nationalists to justify their political aggression, at times even violence. Robert N. Minor argues that "exhortation to action from the god Krishna suited well the aspirations of Indian nationalists in their struggle for *swaraj*…. They regarded Krishna as the *karmayogin* par excellence, working unceasingly and with total selflessness"[4]. This was particularly true about Tilak's *Gita-Rahashya* (1915) but the idea about the utility of Gita during nationalist movement was also widely shared by other nationalists and revolutionaries like Aurobindo, Shyamji Krishna Verma and Savarkar, who engaged with the text in different ways. It is in this context that Gandhi's reading of Gita and his contribution to the larger discourse on its meaning needs to be situated.

Commentators and scholars have viewed Gandhi's engagement with Gita variously. Dipesh Chakrabarty and Rochona Mazumdar argue that Gandhi's engagement with Gita fundamentally transformed his understanding about politics, wherefrom trying to 'purify' politics he used Gita as a means to protect himself "from the corrupt practices

of politics while being immersed in political action"[5]. Similarly, Faisal Devji has also highlighted how Gita provides the foundation for Gandhi to develop a new sense of morality, transgressing the older parameters, even in the shadow of politics to make it available for masses to follow.[6] Others like Parekh[7], Parel[8], Mehta[9], and Skaria[10] have concentrated on the ways in which Gita helps Gandhi devise some his foundational philosophical categories like *satyagraha*, *satya*, *ahimsa*, or *sewa* among others. More recently, Karline McLain has shown how Gandhi adopted the teachings of the Gita in the daily practices of his "intentional communities" (or *ashrams*) that he established in South Africa and later in India.[11] She convincingly argues that the practice of enacting the teachings of Gita by Gandhi along with his fellow *ashramites* prepared them to evolve as disciplined soldiers who were even ready for self-sacrifice for the greater good of community. However, I perceive Gandhi's reading and interpretation of Gita and its core message from a different vantage point. I see Gandhi as engaging with some fundamental questions which all of us, as ordinary beings face, in our everyday life in everything that we do, and he tries to resolve the dilemma inherent in such questions using the rationality contained in the Gita. In this paper, I show that it was Gita that helped Gandhi develop a deontological approach which provided a framework for moral judgments in everyday life. In the first part, I analyse Gandhi's engagement with the text where I discuss how he perceived the idea of moral action and how he defines it in the background of his reading of Gita. In the second part I try to unravel Gandhi's deontological framework where I try to engage with questions like- Did Gandhi even have a deontological framework, and if at all, what were the conditions he proposed for judging acts on the parameter of morality? Further, I discuss the principles that formed the basis of moral act in everyday life, according to Gandhi, and the maxims that governed such acts. Through these discussions I aim to argue that Gandhi exhibited a robust deontological framework which could determine the morality of each act, thereby providing an ethical foundation to choices we make in our everyday life. He not only devises the principles on which the moral dilemmas in our judgment could be overcome, rather also suggests ways in which these principles can become part of our everyday practice, thereby rendering every act to be moral, and the inspiration for this comes directly from his reading and understanding of Gita.

Gandhi's reading of the Gita

Gandhi's acquaintance with Gita can be traced to 1890, during his stay in London, when two theosophists invited him to read Sir Edwin

Arnold's translation of the text titled *The Song Celestial*. By that time, as he mentions in his autobiography, he had not read the Gita. After the first reading itself, he felt so inspired by the text that he learnt Sanskrit only to read the text in original. The influence was so remarkable that he often used adjectives like "spiritual reference book"[12], "infallible guide of conduct", and "my dictionary of daily reference"[13] reflecting the integral role Gita played in developing his spiritual/philosophical vantage point. His most serious engagement with the text occurred during a series of talks delivered at Sabarmati ashram in 1926-27, which was compiled and published originally in Gujarati with the title *Anasakti Yoga* in 1930. Further, he also wrote a series of letters to *ashramites* during his stay at Yervada jail, later published under the title *Discourses on Gita*, dedicating each letter to a chapter of Gita explaining his understanding in a more lucid language.

Gandhi's understanding of the Gita went beyond its possible contribution in the nationalist movement. He saw it as an advocate for an ethical way of living. He claimed that his was an endeavor to "reduce to practice the teaching of the Gita".[14] Considering the context in which Gandhi engaged with the Gita and the surrounding discourse over its meaning at the time, it can be argued that he approached Gita with his own set of prejudices, at times to such an extent that it appears eisegetic. But it is equally true that he never claimed to be an expert on the subject or that he was attempting an authentic interpretation of the text. Rather what he explicitly claimed was that he was not ready to take any scripture at its face value. "I exercise my judgment about every scripture, including the Gita. I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason", he maintained.[15] Also, it cannot be ignored that his engagement with Gita was creatively used by him as an opportunity to develop an alternative vision of politics, which probably could not be achieved otherwise.

Gandhi takes Mahabharata and Gita not as moments in history but as allegory representing the moral conflict within us and as prescription to overcome the inherent moral dilemmas. He opined that "the human body is the battlefield where the eternal duel between right and wrong goes on", and this duel according to him, was between the forces of evil and forces of good, as represented in the Mahabharata.[16] Similarly, the violence and physical warfare depicted in the text, according to him were "brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring" by the poet.[17] He strongly believed that neither the Mahabharata nor the Gita had anything to do with warfare or violence, rather it emphasized on the inefficacy of violence, as the author "made the victors shed tears of sorrow and repentance, and has left them nothing but a legacy of

miseries."[18] The central contribution of the text was in bridging the gap between *moksha* and worldly pursuits. The author had, Gandhi held, "drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits. On the contrary he has shown that religion must rule every worldly pursuit… what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion."[19] It suggested ways in which individual can lead a normal life and yet pursue the goal of salvation by sticking to moral actions in everyday life. Self-realisation through performance of *svadharma* was the goal of Gita. Arjuna as the seeker personified each one of us, facing moral dilemmas in our daily choices, and Krishna as avatar, personified perfection. Through Gita, "the object is to show most excellent way to attain self-realisation".[20] This understanding, hints at the world affirming teaching of the Gita and its utility as a suggestive text for an ethical living. In a way Gandhi, through his interpretation of Gita, also questions the otherworldly, esoteric approach to moksha.[21]

The question then is: how does one act morally in every pursuit? The conundrum of everyday life provides an opportunity for individual to test one's ethical sustainability and adoption of a moral life. Every act is a product of choices one makes among the many that every situation has on offer. Gandhi believes that the first condition for moral act is that it is to be performed not due to fear but as an obligation to do right. As such no action which is not voluntary can be called moral.[22] The following condition would be that the voluntary action be based on knowledge and not ignorance. But is it enough for an act to be voluntary and based on knowledge to qualify as a moral act? Gandhi believed that the most pertinent hurdle while performing a moral act is the fear about consequences. This focus on consequences creates moral dilemmas that affect our performance. According to him, moral act is one's subjective commitment to principles, the consequences of which one is prepared to abide by. Gita, he argued, provided a matchless remedy for all such moral dilemmas- the renunciation of fruits of action. "He who gives up action falls he who gives up only the reward rises", Gandhi remarked.[23] The non-attachment to the fruit of action allows individual to carry one's *svadharma* in the spirit of freedom, without fear or favor. Stable wisdom (through renunciation of fruits of action) propelled by self-discipline and duty can ensure that each choice made and decisions taken are in the direction of righteousness and each act performed is a moral act.

Gandhi's deontological framework

The present section shall discuss the deontological framework developed by Gandhi that is significant for the judgment of moral

acts, and the contribution of Gita in this imagination. It shall include a discussion about the primary conditions for any act to qualify as moral, the principles for moral act and also the maxims that, according to Gandhi, determine the morality of any act. A deontological framework helps one to judge if a particular action is morally right or wrong based on whether the obligations attached are honored or not, regardless of the consequences such actions produce. The deontological approach stands in contradistinction to the teleological approaches in the role that is attributed to the consequences of the action under review. For the purpose of such analysis, the first question that becomes important is- whether the act is intrinsic or is it instrumental i.e. is the act valuable in and of itself or is the focus on teleology? For consequentialists, the only significant moral factor is the consequence of an act, all other factors being only instrumentally significant. Contrarily, for deontology, it is not the consequences that determine the morality of an act. Rather, it holds that there are certain intrinsically valuable moral constraints that bar us from certain types of action even if those acts lead to better results, and at times, there are maxims that enable certain acts that might not lead to desired consequences but are moral in themselves. Morality of an act depends on whether these obligations (which are non-negotiable) are honored or not, regardless of the consequences such acts produce. So, according to this approach, there are other factors that have intrinsic moral significance and not consequences. In deontology, therefore, morality of an act should be based on whether that act itself is right or not. It indicates at a system of duty and obligation that shapes our judgment in everyday choices.

Gandhi's philosophy exhibits a robust system of deontological framework which can help in moral judgments. According to Gandhi's framework there are at least two well-structured conditions or pre-requisites for any moral judgment regarding an act. Firstly, there is no choice not to act, and secondly, the act has to be non-consequentialist in nature. Rejection of the possibility of not acting is the first requirement for such moral judgments. The choice is not between acting and not acting, but rather on how to act morally because choosing not to act or escapism is fundamentally against the teachings of the Gita, and giving up of action, Gandhi argues, is against the very nature of being. An individual can at no time "cease to work; indeed, he is nothing if not a worker."[24] This is strongly reiterated by Gandhi where he observed that, "The fifth verse of Chapter III of the Gita states a profound truth. Scientist after scientist has told us that the principle enunciated in it is a universal law. It simply means that no human being can cease from *karma* even for a moment. *Karma* or

motion is the universal law of all material things and forms of life."[25] The emphasis on *karma* is also, at times, seen as his critique of asceticism or world renouncing interpretations of Gita.[26] In the context of Gita, there is a significant episode that emphasizes this point in a different way. While pursuing Arjuna to take part in the war, Krishna points out that even if Arjuna does not participate, the war will happen, though the consequences may be different. It is therefore suggested by Krishna that it is better to be an exemplar by showcasing bravery at critical moments, than refusing to act. So, the choice of not acting does not affect or change the situation or the reality, and hence the choice loses its ethical validity. It was therefore neither desirable, nor possible, not to act, and Gandhi held, "Freedom from action is freedom from the bondage of action. This freedom is not to be gained by cessation of all activity, apart from the fact that this cessation is in the very nature of things impossible."[27] Secondly, in order for an act to qualify as moral, it needed to be non-consequentialist. In Gandhi's lexicon, the focus over means rather than end sums up this important recommendation. "They say 'means are after all means', I would say 'means are after all everything'", Gandhi claimed.[28] Let me draw from a discussion between Tilak and Gandhi on ethics and politics to elaborate this point.[29] In this exchange both draw from their understanding of Gita and in particular from their interpretation of *karma yoga*. Tilak held that, at times most moral of people also have to compromise with ethical means in order to achieve political ends. He argues that the essential requirement for any act to be moral, according to Gita, is that the end desired and aimed at should be 'selfless' and not for personal benefits. But Gandhi held that even if the goal is selfless, the compromise over means was not acceptable. He criticized Tilak for his oft-repeated quotation 'everything is fair in politics' by arguing that it 'enunciates bad law'.[30] He firmly believed that no end achieved through immoral means could ever be ethical. He went to such an extent as to say that even if the goal was as ideal as *swaraj*, he would not suggest the use of unethical means. He opined, "After all, the real definition (of *swaraj*) will be determined by our action, the means we adopt to achieve the goal. If we would but concentrate upon the means, *swaraj* will take care of itself. Our explorations should, therefore, take place in the direction of determining not the definition of an indefinable term like *swaraj* but in discovering the ways and means."[31] According to Gandhi, the central teaching of *karma yoga* in Gita, as I shall show in the next section, was the principle of non-attachment to the fruit of our action. This form of renunciation was essential to ensure that the individual could carry his duty with complete devotion, and the worry or fear about consequences did

not shake him from acting morally. It also shifted the focus from consequences to the very nature of act itself, allowing its judgment on the principles of morality. Commentators like Clough have argued that through Gita, Gandhi wanted to legitimize the marriage between religion and politics by emphasizing the need of being moral in political acts if ethical political goals were aimed at.[32] Though this observation has some merit, to argue that it was a deliberate act on part of Gandhi, would be an exaggeration, more so because both religion and politics have deep spiritual meaning for him and it often transcends their popular usage.[33]

Moral act in Gandhi's deontological framework

According to Gandhi's framework there are certain important principles that need to be followed in order to ensure that every act performed by an individual is moral. These include the spirit of non-attachment to the fruits of the action, the emphasis on duty, and the practice of self-purification. Along with these, he also suggests certain maxims that need to be followed, illustrated most effectively in the primacy Gandhi renders to vows.

Work for work's sake: The non-attachment to fruits of action

At the core of Gandhi's recommendations for moral action is his belief in non-attachment to the fruits of action, which he derives from the *karma-yoga* theory of Gita. Unfortunately, McLain in her work, while discussing about the impact of Gita on Gandhi and how he practiced it in everyday life in the *ashrams*, seems to miss this important aspect of Gita's influence on Gandhi. For Gandhi, focusing on the fruits led to worry about the consequences of the act, which was both undesirable and futile. It was futile because according to Gandhi, "A man can never have any say as regards the fruit of his action, as the nature of the fruit is determined by a number of independent factors".[34] Krishna in the Gita explains five important factors that affect the fruit of any action - the body, the doer, the instrument, effort, and providence – and over most of these Krishna held that the doer had very little control.[35] Attachment to the fruits of action was also undesirable because Gandhi believed that the love for fruit of action cultivated in individual both desire and expectations. Desires and expectations promoted instrumentality and made individual possessive, which diverted the concentration of the actor towards the achievement of desired goals. In the absence of control over outcomes such possessiveness was even more harmful as the actor would try to achieve the desired fruits at any cost, even at the cost of morality itself. So, all forms of attachment to the fruits of action produced serious hurdles

for the actor to perform moral act, and often led to deviation from the path. Gandhi wrote, "Brooding over result is problem not absence of want of fruit because it makes one impatient and he is ready to resort to any means fair or foul to attain his end."[36] However, detachment in Gandhian sense does not mean ignorance of fruits of action or its negligence. This point needs to be stressed. Gandhi was conscious of the cause-effect relationship that every cause ought to produce certain effects, therefore he only wanted that the expected results to be produced by the act should not in any way affect the performance of the act. He explained his position in the following words:

> Renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He, who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result; and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfillment of the task before him is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.[37]

Gandhi epitomizes this principle of non-attachment in his idea of *satyagraha*, which he devised not only as a political tool for attainment of *swaraj*, but rather as a way of ethical living. So committed he was to the principle that he even advocated a spirit of non-attachment for the *satyagrahi* even to the ideals of *swaraj*. He said, "We should do no work with attachment. Attachment to good work, is that too wrong? Yes, it is. If we are attached to our goal of winning *swaraj*, we shall not hesitate to adopt bad means…. Hence, we should not be attached even to a good cause. Only then will means remain pure and our actions too."[38]

Emphasis on Duty

Another important principle for moral action emanates from Gandhi's insistence on duty. The idea of duty emerges in his discussions about *dharma* and *svadharma*. Often interpreters of Gita have used these terms in relation to caste-based duty, and rightly so, as in the Gita Krishna invokes the idea in this context, whereby, he tries to convince Arjuna that his *dharma* as a *kshatriya* is to show valor in the battlefield and not run away. Also, in other verses he reiterates justifications for the same. For example, in Chapter IV verse 13 he says, "The fourfold caste has been created by me according to the differentiation of guna and karma". However, few scholars like Aurobindo have interpreted *svadharma* as "Law of action".[39] In the case of Gandhi the idea is used in both the sense. However, his understanding of *dharma* and *svadharma*

takes shape in relation to the idea of rights. For Gandhi, *svadharma* would mean the "allotted task, task that falls to one's lot".[40] This has connotations for moral action in everyday life. It is evident when he argues that, "one's respective dharma towards one's self, family, nation and the world cannot be divided into watertight compartments."[41] At least it is clear for him that *dharma/svadharma* is not restricted to caste-based understanding of duty. He consistently advocated that "the right to perform duty is the only right worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights."[42] In fact for him the true source of right was duty. This insistence on duty also minimizes the moral burden from consequences. If the focus remains on performance of duty, non-attachment to the fruits of action is both its necessary condition as well as its product. Performance of duty through non-attachment was possible through a combination of knowledge and devotion, according to Gandhi.[43] Knowledge about the act to be performed including its possible consequences, and yet performing the act without fearing the consequences, reflects the spirit of duty. At the same time, devotion to God- the idea that every act is an offering to God, so that the actor's responsibility for the good and evil results will cease altogether- provides the moral acumen to perform one's duty.[44]

The practice of self-purification

The process of self-purification prepares the 'self' for moral act because Gandhi believed that "without inward purification, work cannot be done in a spirit of non-attachment."[45] Self-purification has to be understood as a means for self-realisation, which in turn is essential for moral action. In Kant's deontological framework, it is 'will' that signifies morality, so, something done in a 'good will' following the set obligations, regardless of the consequences, would be called a moral act.[46] Gandhi, in a way stretches the requirement further by seemingly advocating the nurturing of a moral 'self', so that the 'will' is never under suspect and be perennially 'good' in performing any act. It is in this sense that self-purification plays a pioneering role and to understand it we need to analyse the idea of self-control, which is so dominant in Gandhi's frame of reference. According to this idea the lower self of an individual reflects desires and ego as it is guided by material worldly pursuits, whereas the higher or true self is the *atman* (spirit), that is pure and devoid of worldly discrepancies. The process of self-realisation undertakes the true realisation of spiritual oneness of all beings and leads to the control of the lower self by the higher self. It resulted in the creation of a spiritually aware person, who was no more a slave of passions but was guided by self-knowledge

in his daily affairs. Self-rule in this sense was based on a disciplined rule from within. This transformation signifies purification and creates an individual who is aware about one's true being and such individual "renounces all the cravings which torment the heart and derives his contentment from within himself".[47] The one who is able to achieve this state of being is introduced in Chapter II (v. 54-72) as *stithaprajna*. *Stithaprajna* represents the individual who has achieved a state of complete self-purification and Gandhi maintained, "A man who has purified himself by means of selfless action, who has his mind and his senses under control and who has identified himself with all beings, loving them as himself- such a man stands apart from action although he is acting all the time, and is not bound by it."[48] It can be argued based on this analysis that self-purification produces a selfless individual who performs his duty in the true spirit of non-attachment and therefore every act the individual undertakes ought to be moral.

Maxims for moral action

Although Gandhi himself never listed the maxims to be followed, in the form of obligations, or those to be avoided in the process of moral judgments, his insistence on the importance of vows has some clues to offer. According to Gandhi, "A vow is a promise made … to do or not to do a certain thing, which, if good, we want to do, but have not the strength unless we are tied down, and which, if bad, we would avoid, but have not the strength to avoid unless similarly tied down."[49] He was an ardent practitioner of vow taking, which he held in high regards as it helped in self-discipline, and never allowed him to deviate from the path of righteousness. At least on two different occasions Gandhi seems to develop a comprehensive list of vows that are integral for moral living. The first is the set of vows and rules that he prepared for the *ashramites* residing at Sabarmati Ashram. These included the vow of truth, doctrine of ahimsa, vow of celibacy, vow of control of the palate, vow of non-thieving, vow of *swadeshi*, vow of fearlessness, vow regarding untouchables, education through vernaculars.[50] Similar vows and rules were reiterated by Gandhi from time to time for the *satyagrahis*, and he also included in the list heart discipline (self-control), be prepared to lose all, honesty, unity, non-violence.[51] He held that vows helped in inflicting moral restraints- both physical and mental- and these restraints "should be self-imposed and not from outside i.e. by fear."[52]

A close look at the vows and rules that Gandhi prepared gives a hint that there were at least three central vows – vows that could not be compromised at any cost, which included *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *abhay* (fearlessness). These vows and its practice,

according to Gandhi, were universally applicable and central to moral conduct. *Satya*, for Gandhi is the supreme value in ethics, religion, politics and the substance of all morality. In fact, for him *satya* is the essence of *dharma*, and therefore there is a permanence attached to it. Truth in the narrow epistemological sense of common usage is only a part of the wider meaning of *satya*.[53] *Satya*, he argued, was derived from the traditional Indian notion of *sat* or the one reality, and was the source of eternal and universal values like truth and righteousness – truth in the realm of epistemology, and righteousness in ontology guiding our conduct in everyday life. The vow of truth, which he advocated, did not therefore consist merely in verbal truthfulness, but in the increased and constant observance of truth in thought, speech and action.[54] His insistence over *satya* as the core principle of our being, and its derivation from ancient Indian sources guided his proposition that "it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth."[55] All our actions should therefore be directed towards Absolute truth, and it was the central vow, failing which, all other vows stood meaningless.

Similarly, for Gandhi any progress on the path of righteousness was not possible if it was not based on *ahimsa*. He opined that, "Non-violence is the greatest force man has been endowed with. Truth is the only goal he has."[56] The relationship between *satya* and *ahimsa* was integral so much so that "truth cannot be, never will be, reached except through non-violence".[57] For him the principles of non-violence were absolute and total, and cannot be compromised at any cost. He insisted that non-violence was the law of our species and it differentiated human nature from that of the brutes as it was unique to human capacity, owing to the gift of rationality that one could follow the principles of non-violence.[58] However, he extended the justification for *ahimsa* from being a part of the essential human nature by locating it in the realm of *dharma*/duty. He held that "ahimsa is the means; truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach and so ahimsa is our supreme duty".[59] What is significant here is that the idea of ahimsa did not only rule avoidance of physical harm, but rather also acted as a mental, psychological refrain. "Ahimsa really means that you may not offend anybody … you may not harbor an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider himself to be your enemy," Gandhi insists.[60]

In addition to these is the value of fearlessness. For Gandhi, fear is the root cause of most mistakes we commit in our everyday lives, and therefore he recommends fearlessness for *satyagrahis*. He firmly believed that essentially all humans are moral and naturally destined to follow the path of truth and righteousness, however, when a man

abandons truth in any way, he did so to avoid fear in some shape or form.[61] This fear may be either due to lack of courage or due to the worry about consequences. He was certain that "the path of truth" was full of challenges and threats, and therefore it was "for the brave alone, never for a coward".[62] It required a lot of courage to consistently and dedicatedly walk this path as it called for sacrifices. Fearlessness prepared one to follow the path of *satya* and *ahimsa* without being deterred by the worry about consequences. These vows are essential in the practice of *satyagraha* that Gandhi defines as work based on non-attachment to the fruits of action. It invariably included the practice of *ahimsa* and *satya* based on fearlessness as when there is no desire for fruits, there is also no temptation for untruth or *himsa*, and even if there is any such temptation, the vows keep us on the path of righteousness.[63]

Conclusion

Gandhi's deontological framework has prescriptions for acting morally in our every pursuit. He held that every action should be performed in the spirit of *yagna*, where *tyaga* is very important. Every doer, thereby, should act as a yogi whose characteristics is to be "stable-minded at all times, and is without effort free from all desires."[64] Each act should be performed as a devotion to God, and this cultivates a selfless spirit who is non-attached to the fruits of action.[65] In this context Gandhi significantly differentiated between *kamya yoga* and *sattvika yoga*. Kamya yoga, according to him, is action guided by desire, giving up of which, according to him constitutes *sanyasa*. But even more pure and ethical is the spirit of *sattvika yoga* which pertains to the service rendered to others because of a feeling that it must be done and without the desire for the fruits. In this form of *tyaga*, therefore, there is no giving up of all actions, but only of the fruits of duties that must be done, and of course of other, that is *kamya* action.[66] This spirit of selfless service and non-attachment helps one to act morally in all pursuits. The insistence on the performance of act in the spirit of non-attachment to the fruits of action also obliterates the focus from consequences and forms the grounds of deontological ethics in the philosophy of Gandhi, the legitimacy of which is derived from *Bhagavad Gita*, which he rightly acknowledges as his "spiritual reference book".

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Mission Antyodaya: Well Envisioned but Poorly Understood

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ABSTRACT

Mission Antyodaya (MA) is a rational scientific attempt in India, which opened a wide platform for 'big data analysis.' Such an initiative is a novel one even in the realm of world literature on decentralized planning. It was also touted as a credible mechanism for addressing multidimensional poverty at the grassroot level in the country. While some say MA is an advanced version of Graibi Hatao of the 1970s, others argue that it strives to envision the Gram Swaraj idea propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. However, despite all the potential it has to offer, MA as a concept and as a process is poorly understood. This paper looks into the various facets of MA and its relevance in rural development. After providing an account of the evolution of MA, its objectives and methodologies involved, the paper critically examines the missing relationship between the participatory planning, Gram Panchayat Development Plan and the MA and how this affected the whole process. The paper also documents the case of Kerala which has showcased good performance in the MA survey results. It critically examines how a state like Kerala renowned for its acclaimed approach in decentralization and participatory planning failed to incorporate this aspect of grassroot level participatory democracy into the MA.

Key words: Decentralisation, Planning, Rural Development, Kerala, Gandhi's Talisman

Introduction

MISSION ANTYODAYA (MA) was first adopted in the Union Budget, 2017-2018.[1] It is envisaged as an accountability and convergence framework for transforming lives and livelihoods based on measurable outcomes. The MA is a scientific yet novel initiative of the Government of India to converge as well as to manage the optimum use of resources allocated by 27 Ministries[2] of the Union Government to accelerate development in rural areas. It strives to realize the vision of poverty-free India. It aims at the well-being of one crore households spread over 50,000 Gram Panchayats (GPs) by addressing multi-dimensional poverty in India through convergence of programmes and schemes along with a saturation approach[3] that focuses on raising income and strengthening institutions. This is sought to be achieved through a cluster approach and the GPs serve as the focal point of convergence. It also enables convergence, partnerships and networking with professionals, institutions, and enterprises for the transformation of rural livelihoods. For example, under the MA, priority is given to SHGs in Antyodaya clusters where they play a crucial role in strengthening of agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry activities along with other developmental activities at the grassroots level. To ensure accountability, the MA framework stresses on strengthening capacity for social audit at the local level. Thus, the MA is built on the foundation of convergence, accountability, and measurable outcomes to provide sustainable livelihoods to the rural poor. An annual survey in GPs across the country is an important aspect of the MA framework. It is carried out in tandem with with the People's Plan Campaign (PPC)[4] and its purpose is to lend support to the preparation of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)[5]in a participatory manner. Popularly known as MA Survey, it ranks the GPs on the basis of the score obtained on various parameters used in the MA Survey. Since its inception, the survey has been carried out prior to the preparation of the GPDP. The survey data and findings are used as a base to assess the gap in each GP and villages in terms of infrastructure, access to basic amenities and the overall socio-economic and human development. These gaps have to be addressed in the GPDP.

This paper looks into the various facets of MA and its relevance in the area of rural development. It traces the evolution of the MA, its objectives and methodologies involved. It also critically examines the missing relationship between the PPC, GPDP and the MA and how this undermined the whole process. The paper also documents the case of Kerala, which has showcased good performance in the MA

survey results. It critically examines how a state like Kerala renowned for its acclaimed decentralization initiative failed to incorporate the aspect of grassroot level participatory democracy in the MA.

Why Mission Antyodaya (MA)?

As per the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011[6], there are a total of 24.39 crore households in India out of which 17.91 crore live in villages. Out of these, 10.69 crore rural households are considered as deprived. The SECC computed the economic status of a household on the basis of seven indicators[7] of deprivation covering aspects of source of income, housing, landlessness, and disability. According to SECC, nearly 49 per cent of the households can be considered poor as they face deprivation in one form or the other even though the overall definition and depth of the 'poverty' may not define them as poor. The deprivations they suffer range from lack of basic amenities including housing, access to free and fair education and absence of earning members in the family to households depending on manual labour. Such inequalities highlighted the need for a comprehensive social security programme to address them. As per the SECC data, nearly 2.37 crore (13.25%) households have only a single 'kutcha' room. Around 5.37 crore are landless. A total of 7.16 lakh households have differently -abled members who live without the support of other able-bodied members. The SECC data revealed that over 90 per cent of rural India does not have salaried jobs and a total of 2.50 crore households have just one salaried member. Nearly 30 per cent of rural households depend on cultivation as their main source of income whereas 51.14 per cent derive sustenance from manual casual labour (MCL). In 75 per cent of rural households, the main earning family member makes less than Rs.5000 per month (Rs.60,000 annually). Only in just 8 per cent of households does the main earning member makes more than Rs.10,000 per month. Nearly 56.25 per cent rural households hold no agricultural land. Therefore, landlessness and reliance on manual labour account for the greatest of deprivation (SECC, 2011). The findings in the data were convincing enough to formulate a convergent and evidence-based plan with the GPs as the basic units to address these issues. It was felt that the deprived households need evidence-based and targeted interventions under various government schemes and programmes in areas such as social security, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, environment, livelihood creation, wage employment and skill development.

Tracing the Evolution of Mission Antyodaya (MA)

The brand name 'Mission Antyodaya' may be a new one, but the word 'Antyodaya' and what it envisages in nothing new to Indians. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya have been exponents of development through Antyodaya, but not many have attempted to decipher the concept they propagated.

1. Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya through Antyodaya

A book of essays on economy, "Unto This Last" by John Ruskin[8] immensely inspired Mahatma Gandhi, which later paved the way for the philosophy of Sarvodaya through Antyodaya. Sarvodaya is a term meaning 'Universal Uplift' or 'Progress of All'. The term was first coined by Mahatma Gandhi as the title of his 1908 translation of Ruskin's "Unto This Last". Gandhi went on to propound the philosophy of inclusive development, "Sarvodaya through Antyodaya", which means development of all through welfare of the weakest section of the society, in his book Hind Swaraj[9]. Antyodaya or the uplifting of the poorest, most deprived groups of people, was a mission close to the Mahatma's heart. Gandhiji's idea of development was of Sarvodaya, the development of all through Antyodaya. In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi wrote that India does not live in its towns but in its villages. "When the cities realize that they must live for the welfare of the poor, they will make their palaces and institutions and the life of their inhabitants correspond somewhat to our villages."[10]

2. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and Antyodaya

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, an iconic figure in Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)[11] and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS)[12] also proposed the concept of "Antyodaya". Literally, 'Antyodaya' means the "rise of the last person" and it was one of the concepts emphasized by Upadhyay, who was also one of the founding leaders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh[13] — the forerunner of the BJP. According to Upadhyay, the measurement of economic plans and economic growth cannot be done with those who have risen above on the economic ladder but of those who are at the bottom. Upadhyaya stressed on 'Antyodaya' to rid the nation of extreme poverty. This formed a part of Upadhyay's core philosophy of "Integral Humanism"[14] that viewed the human as distinct from capitalism and communism.

3. Union Budget 2017 – 18 and the birth of Mission Antyodaya

The Union Budget 2017 was a crucial annual financial document after the demonetization drive. It also made clear that improving the life

of people in rural areas is a 'non-negotiable agenda' for the BJP government. Here are a few excerpts from the 2017 budget speech made by the then Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley:

> I now turn to the Rural Sector, which was so dear to the heart of Mahatma Gandhi. Over Rs. 3 lakh crores are spent in rural areas every year, if we add up all the programmes meant for rural poor from the Central Budget, State Budgets, Bank linkage for self-help groups, etc. With a clear focus on improving accountability, outcomes, and convergence, we will undertake a Mission Antyodaya to bring one crore households out of poverty and to make 50,000 gram panchayats poverty free by 2019[15], the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. We will utilise the existing resources more effectively along with annual increases. This mission will work with a focused micro plan for sustainable livelihood for every deprived household. A composite index for poverty free gram panchayats would be developed to monitor the progress from the baseline.[16]

4. Mission Antyodaya– A Political or Bureaucratic Product?

The MA is one of the flagship programmes of the BJP government built on the philosophy of 'Integral Humanism' by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. However, there have been arguments that the MA is bureaucracy-driven and lacks political ownership. Authors of this paper are of the opinion that despite the political aspect involved in the launching of MA, it is formulated and designed within a largely bureaucratic framework with political blessings.

Primary Objectives of MA

- To ensure effective use of resources through the convergence of various government schemes with GPs as the basic units of planning.
- To build and encourage partnerships with network of professionals, institutions, and enterprises to strengthen and transform rural livelihoods.
- Conduct a nationwide MA survey to assess the measurable outcomes at the GP level and to assess the gaps that need to be addressed.
- Support the process of participatory planning for GPDP by addressing the gaps found in the survey and thus develop a focused micro plan for sustainable livelihoods by improving governance and service delivery at the grassroots level.

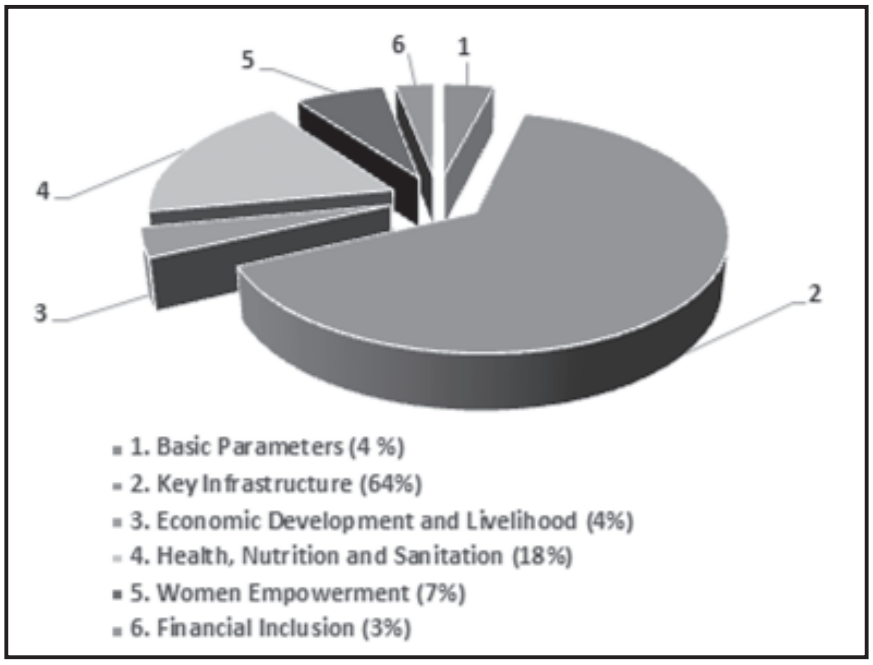
Methodology Adopted for MA Survey

The MA Surveys are conducted at the GP level, if a GP has more than one village, the average will be taken as the score value for the GP.

Parameters and Score Value for MA Survey 2017 and 2018

As a precursor to the preparation of annual GPDP, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has directed all the states to undertake the MA survey every year - a survey by which the GPs all over the country are ranked based on three indicators i.e., basic infrastructure, human development, and economic activity. By this exercise, the development gaps needing specific intervention are identified and the GPs prepare the GPDP. In 2017 and 2018, the GPs were ranked on the basis of 46 parameters, but only six out of 29 subjects devolved were evaluated. In other words, 46 parameters connected to six subjects such as (i) health, nutrition, and sanitation (ii) economic development and livelihood (iii) financial inclusion (iv) basic parameters (v) key infrastructure (vi) women empowerment were only evaluated (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Subjects Evaluated and Ranking Parameters in MA Survey 2017& 2018



***Source**: Compiled and Computed by the Authors from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India.*

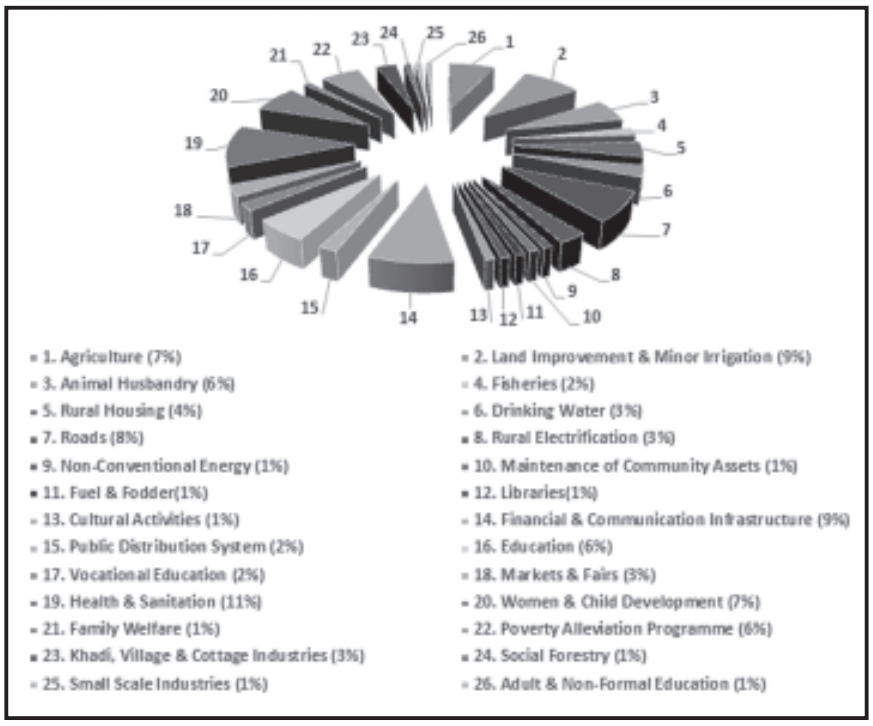
The maximum score for the 46 parameters was 100. The first one was on location details which consist of eight entries including names and code numbers. There was no score value for the parameter of

'location' as it was used only for furnishing location specific details. Under basic parameters', there were nine questions and the score value was given only for one question, which is for area under irrigation in hectares and the score value was four. There were 22 questions for the parameter on 'key infrastructure' and the total score value was 64. Out of the 22 questions, two of them carry no marks. There were two questions (question no. 10 on percentage of household engaged exclusively in farm activities and question no. 13 on availability of banks / business correspondent with internet connectivity), with no score value. The score value for other questions varied from five to one. The 'parameters on health, nutrition and sanitation' had eight questions with a total value of 18 and it was distributed among only seven questions, and one question did not carry any marks and the marks varied from one to four. There was one parameter that exclusively dealt with 'women empowerment' which has four questions with a total value of seven and it varies from one to three. There was only one question under the parameter of 'financial inclusion' with total value of three marks. Some questions were qualitative in nature where the answer was either affirmative or negative. The affirmative answer was treated with maximum marks whereas the negative answer was given zero. In the case of quantitative questions, the volume and degree of the situation was considered and score value was given according to a scale constructed for the purpose. The major limitation of the parameters and score value applied in the MA Survey 2017 and 2018 is that only limited association has been established between the questions in the parameters and the functional domain of the GPs. When all the four questions in the MA Survey format of 2018 were distributed, it was found that there were no questions related to 12 subjects.

Parameters and Score Value for MA Survey 2019 and 2020

The MA survey 2019 is a restructured one and some of the limitations of the earlier exercise were rectified. As in the case of the survey in 2018 within the same methodological framework, the MA survey 2019 was conducted at the village level. However, the number of the parameters and the score value were drastically changed. The parameters were increased from 46 to 112 to cover all the 29 subjects transferred to the GPs as per the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Subjects Evaluated and Ranking Parameters in MA Survey 2019 & 2020



***Source**: Compiled and Computed by the Authors from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India*

However, out of the 29 subjects only 26 subjects were given score value and three subjects (social welfare, welfare of the weaker sections and minor forest produce) were assigned zero value. Two subjects (i). land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation and (ii). minor irrigation, water management and watershed development) are clubbed in to one 'land improvement and minor irrigation'. One new subject, namely, 'financial and communication infrastructure' was included in addition to the 29 subjects transferred to GPs. For example, the subject on 'health and sanitation' has more activities in the functional domain of the GP whereas the subject on 'non- conventional energy' has only very little to do with the GP and it is reflected in the allocation of score values. Therefore, while health and sanitation are given maximum score value, the non-conventional energy is given minimum value. Though the total score values have been fixed as 100, the value of each parameter

has been changed as per the increase in the number of questions. The MA methodology as well as parameters and score value have remained unchanged since 2019. Attempts are being made to revise the parameters and score value for the future MA surveys by laying more emphasis on drinking water by incorporating components of Jal Jeevan Mission[17] under Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is also supporting the Jal Jeevan Mission as the installation of Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household requires skilled workforce in areas like masonry, plumbing, fitting and electricity.

Design of Survey tool for MA Survey

The questionnaires that have been designed for the MA survey are classified into Part A and Part B. Part A deals primarily with the availability of the infrastructures under 29 subjects. GPs are expected to ensure economic empowerment and social justice to the rural poor through implementation of development activities. Part B deals with the services availed by the rural poor under sectors like health, nutrition, social security, water management and efficiency for a decent living.

Fourteenth Finance Commission (14th FC) and GPDP

Though there were many attempts to give a new lease of life to Panchayati Raj, it is the 73rd Constitutional Amendment in 1992 that had ushered in the present phase where Panchayats are described as institutions of local-self-government and are expected to prepare plans for economic development and social justice. The Amendment provided for a uniform structure of three tiers at village, intermediate/block, and district levels. With the introduction of Gram Sabha (GS), it also paved the way for grassroots level direct democracy with constitutional mandate. The 73rd Amendment allows states to endow Panchayats with powers and authority 'to enable them to function as institutions of self-government'. Article 243 G of the Indian Constitution outlines the functions of the GPs as (i) preparation of plans for economic development and social justice (ii) the implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice as may be entrusted to them in matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule. Despite all these virtues, decentralization has been uneven across states largely due to the absence of adequate financial autonomy and devolution of fiscal powers[18]. As a result, local governments fared poorly in the ensuring efficacy in the service delivery, inclusiveness, and accountability. The Union Government and various state

governments had taken up several initiatives to correct the situation. However, the planning process of the Panchayats were found inadequate for want of resources and technical support. It was at this juncture that the 14th FC[19] recommended giving Rs. 2 lakh crores to GPs between 2015 -2020.

The 14th FC was constituted on January 2, 2013. It recommended grants to the GPs for planning and delivering of basic services smoothly and effectively. As per the 14th FC, the local governments are required to spend the grants only for basic services within the functional domain assigned to them under relevant state legislations. Grants are divided into two – i.e., basic grants and performance grants. The basic grants are released to GPs for the delivery of basic services including water supply, sanitation including septage management, sewerage and solid waste management, storm water drainage, maintenance of community assets, maintenance of roads, footpaths, street-lighting, and burial and cremation grounds. The performance grants are provided based on receipts and expenditure received through audited accounts and increase in own revenues. Even as the government accepted the recommendations of the 14th FC, it was clear that such a huge amount could not be transferred to the elected functionaries[20] without giving them proper training in planning, accounting, and auditing[21]. Thus, the MoPR came up with the idea of GPDP — an annual plan of each Panchayat where the local community would decide on how the money should be spent. The state government communicates the "resource envelope" to all GPs. At the end, every Panchayat knows how much money it has under different schemes and how it should plan. Once a plan is formulated, the GS passes it.

As per the directives of the 14th FC, the 90 percent of the earmarked basic grants for GPs were distributed based on population (2011 census) and the remaining 10 per cent on the basis of geographical area. The total grant recommended was Rs. 2,87,436 crores for a five-year period. Out of which, the grant to the GPs was Rs.2,00,292 crores and rest was given to the Municipalities[22]. The 14thFC report said: We recommend that the local bodies should be required to spend the grants only on the basic services within the functions assigned to them under relevant legislations"[23]. Again, "we recognize that there is a need to trust and have respect for local bodies as institutions of local self-government[24]". The 14th FC was of the opinion that the trust-based approach[25] adopted by them is based on the understanding that the local governments will discharge their statutory functions with all due care. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Governments (ULGs) are de-jure institutions of local self-governments. It is up to the state governments to decide the extent

of financial, functional and sphere autonomy to be provided to these institutions. As a result, the degree of devolution varies from state to state.[26] Sensing that the local governments require seamless access of funds, the 14th FC strongly opined that "no further conditions or directions other than those indicated by us should be imposed either by Union or the state governments for the release of funds"[27].

Though the recommendations of the 14th FC did not stipulate the preparation of GPDP as a condition to release the basic grants to the GPs, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Government of India, in its operative guidelines to the GPs suggested that for the utilization of the basic grants, emphasis should be given to information dissemination regarding the planning process and its benefit to citizens, so as to generate a campaign process in this regard.[28] It was in this context, MoPR issued model guidelines for decentralized planning at the GP level for formulating GPDP in 2015. The model guidelines were finalized following a series of meetings with states including a write-shop at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)[29], Thrissur, in Kerala on participatory GPDP, and a similar programme was organized in Guwahati for the Northeastern Region[30]. The following are the salient features of the GPDP guidelines[31]:

- The guidelines linked the performance of basic functions of the GPs including poverty reduction, socio-economic development, public service delivery and good governance and all these ought to be reflected in the final GPDP.
- The guidelines emphasized the need for convergence between different sectors during planning and also suggested the formation of an empowered committee at the state level to ensure smooth coordination between line departments and to address the concerns and queries while preparing the GPDP. Similar coordination committees were suggested to be formed at district and block levels.
- It stressed the need for a campaign mode for local planning through suitable environment creation.
- The guidelines detailed the trained and qualified human resources required to carry out various functions during the pre-planning, planning and post planning stages and the sources from which such resources can be drawn. It laid down the technological interventions required for capacity building and IT applications in budgeting and accounting.
- For implementation of a convergent GPDP plan, the guidelines emphasized the need to coordinate with departments, individuals, experts, SHGs and CBOs. It suggested that the line departments concerned may issue detailed and joint circulars explaining the necessity of working in tandem with the GPs and ensure coordination during the plan preparation and implementation process.

- Review, monitoring, and evaluation were to start with the Gram Sabha, followed by the GP, the Intermediate Panchayat, District Panchayat, and the State. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) by academic institutions, state, and national level monitors, IT based monitoring etc. were also suggested.
- The guidelines also contained suggestions on other aspects of the GPDP preparation and implementation process such as incentivizing performance, capacity building, accountability systems and timelines.
- In the case of administrative and technical approval and implementation arrangements, the guidelines lay down the centrality of the GPs stating that the works selected by the GPs should be treated as final unless their cost implications are beyond sanctioned limits in which case the GP should be urged to downsize.
- Recognizing the special needs and privileges given to the Fifth Schedule Areas[32] governed under Panchayat Extension of Scheduled Areas (PESA)[33], MoPR, issued a separate set of guidelines for PESA areas by making the Village and the Gram Sabha, the centre-stage of all prioritization and planning activities under the GPDP.

States were requested to adapt and contextualize the process listed in the framework as deemed relevant and were asked to come out with a concrete plan of action for environment generation for rolling out GPDP. In 2018, the MoPR issued a comprehensive "Guideline for Preparation of GPDP" after consultation with states and stakeholders. Following are the steps involved in the formulation of GPDP.

1. Environment creation and community mobilization.
2. Collection of primary and secondary data.
3. Situation analysis, need assessment, gap identification and preparation of Development Status Report.
4. Visioning exercise for goal setting.
5. Resources and identification/estimation of corresponding activities as part of Special Gram Sabha.
6. Plan development, prioritisation and projectization
7. Final approval of the GPDP.
8. Implementation, monitoring and impact analysis.

Peoples Plan Campaign (PPC) for GPDP and Mission Antyodaya : In 2015 – 16, consequent to the 14th FC grants to GPs, the MoPR introduced GPDP and two years later that is in 2017 -18, the MA was launched. It was decided that the GPDP and the MA should be carried out in a campaign mode. To improve the quality of GPDPs, the MoPR and Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India, jointly launched People's Plan Campaign under the theme "*Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas* in 2018. In 2019 and 2020, People's

Plan Campaigns (PPCs) were conducted for preparing comprehensive GPDPs and the same process is still under way in 2021. The PPCs are aimed at improving the quality of the GPDP substantially. The PPCs were to build a link between gap assessment and identification through the MA Survey with the GPDP preparation. As part of the PPC, GPs have to collect as well as update MA Survey data for evidence-based planning exercise. A facilitator for each GP is nominated for providing requisite support and coordination with frontline officials of line departments for conducting Special Gram Sabha for the preparation of GPDP.

Role of Gram Sabha

Gram Sabha is a forum for people's participation in grassroot level governance. It provides opportunity to the rural people to get involved in the development programmes of their village and make the administration transparent. It is the responsibility of the elected functionaries, frontline workers, and local citizens to see that the GS functions as per the rules and expectations. Gandhiji once said "The Greater the Power of the Panchayats, the better for the People"[34]. GPDP is an intensive structured exercise for planning at GS through convergence between PRIs and the concerned Line Departments.

A Comprehensive Special GS is conducted in all GPs across the country as part of the PPC for GPDP. In this Special GS, all developmental needs and gaps identified from MA survey will be discussed. In this GS, the frontline workers give a brief structured presentation regarding the activities of each line department as well as make public disclosure before the GS regarding progress of activities implemented in the current year along with fund utilization. In addition, activities proposed to be taken up during the financial year and funds to be allocated for the same are to be disclosed. The public disclosure statement is to be submitted to the GPs for incorporating it in the GPDP plans, once the same has been approved by the GS. The facilitators appointed shall also ensure community mobilization including vulnerable sections like SC/ST/Women during the GS. The village organisations/SHGs may be supported to present before the GS a poverty reduction plan, which, after deliberation, can be incorporated in the GPDP. During the Special GS, gaps will be identified from MA survey and other data. These gaps are indicative of sectoral requirements which need to be adequately addressed through interventions under different schemes of the line departments and other developmental activities. The GS should classify the gaps in three broad categories – (i) Critically Important, (ii) High Priority and (ii) Desirable. Keeping in view the gap analysis and prioritization,

GPs may finalize activities to be taken up under GPDP. A public information board of the size of 20 feet x 10 feet should be installed[35] in every GP at a prominent place with background information of the respective Panchayats, important gaps emerging from the MA parameters, along with physical and financial progress of interventions under the schemes. The field visit by the authors of this paper during the months of December 2018, January 2019 revealed that out of 150 randomly selected GPs in four states, only 38.66 per cent of GPs had installed the boards[36]. The state wise data shows that in Tamil Nadu all the 20 selected GPs placed the boards. It was 55 per cent in Karnataka, 23.33 per cent in Odisha and only 6.67 per cent in Kerala. It is important to note that during the field visits, the GPs in Tamil Nadu were under the control of bureaucracy since elections were not conducted.

After completion of the MA Survey, it should be validated by the GS. A printed copy of the information collected from each village should be placed before the GS for approval. Based on the feedback, necessary changes have to be made. The village organisations/SHGs have to present a poverty reduction plan to be incorporated in the GPDP. After formulation of the GPDP in the prescribed format and with the approval of GS, the final plan should be published and uploaded in PlanPlus[37]

An overview of Mission Antyodaya across the States

During 2017 and 2018, the first all India baseline MA Survey, covering 2.5 lakhs GPs (50,000 in 2017 and 2,00,000 in 2018), was conducted. In 2017 & 18, MA Survey was conducted in 2,47,910 GPs. It is seen that 2,66, 422 GPs were covered in 2019 by the survey. In 2020, a total of 2, 67, 459 GPs conducted the Survey.

In 2017 & 2018 MA Survey, Kalikiri, Kodandarampuram and Uranduru GPs in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh secured a score of 100 and topped the list.[38] A total of 195 GPs in Andhra Pradesh figured in the 91 – 100 score range and out of that 189 GPs are from Chittoor District. In Gujarat, a total of 32 GPs also figured in the same score range. In Anand district in Gujarat a total of 20 GPs figure in the 91 -100 score range. Kerala, a state hailed for its decentralization under 1996 PPC, did not have a single GP in this score range. Meanwhile, in Kerala, out of the 939 GPs that have uploaded the status, 91 GPs scored in the range of 81 to 90.

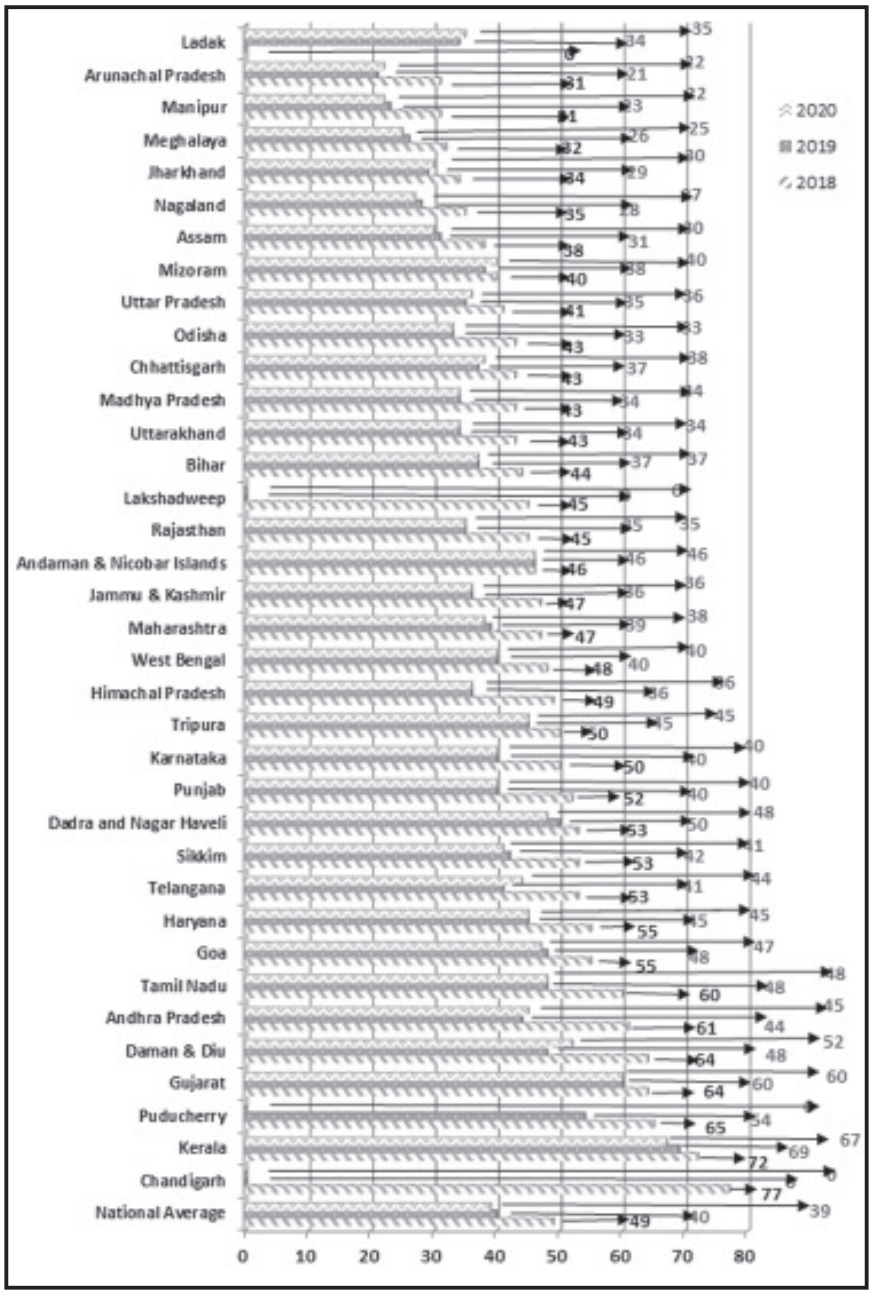
Tamil Nadu's Molugamboondi GP in Tiruvannamalai district has topped the 2019 MA Survey rankings[39] of GPs in the country by scoring high on implementation of development and infrastructure programmes. Baben and Vahelal GPs in Gujarat secured the second

rank, with a score of 88. ln the 81 to 90 score range, 75 GPs in Gujarat and 66 GPs in Punjab made it to the list while only 27 GPs from Kerala figured in the same score range. A total of 16 GPs in Odisha, 15 GPs in Maharashtra, 14 GPs in Tamil Nadu were also placed under the same score range. At the national level, in 2019 the MA Survey was conducted in 2,66,422 GPs all over the country. It is seen that 64 per cent of the GPs surveyed all over the country scored in the range of below 41 and about one per cent of the GPs scored above 71. Yelkurthi GP in Medak district and Sulthanpur GP in Pedapalli district in Telengana, Minapur GP in Surendranagar in Gujarat and Hulakoti in Gadag district in Karnataka are the Panchayats that have secured the score value of 90 in 2020 MA Survey[40]. All the four GPs have shared the first rank in the country.

Trends Observed in the State Average Score and National Average in MA Survey Since 2018

States including Kerala, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Goa and Haryana are among the states that have consistently maintained an average score above national average in 2018, 2019 and 2020 in the MA Survey. Among these Kerala has an edge over all other states and UTs in all the three consecutive years in terms of obtaining an average score significantly higher than national average. For instance, in 2018, the average score obtained by Kerala in MA Survey was 72 and national average was just 49. Though in 2018, Kerala was second only to Chandigarh, it still maintained a better average score higher than that of national average. In 2019 MA Survey, Kerala secured an average score of 69 and all India average was only 40. In 2019, the average score of Kerala dropped to 69 from 72, but the state was still in a better position when compared to other states and the overall national average. In 2020 too, Kerala is still at the top among the states in MA Survey in terms of average score of 67 and is still above the national average. Among the states, Gujarat is the second-best performing state giving in terms of average score against the national average (Figure 3).

Figure 3: MA Survey 2018, 2019 &2020:
State Wise Average Score



Source: *Computed and Compiled by the Authors from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India.*

Critique of Mission Antyodaya

The missing link or connect between GPDPs prepared and the gaps emerging from the MA Survey findings has hindered and undermined the process of preparing comprehensive GPDP. As per the MoPR guidelines, the findings and the gap report assessments from MA Survey should serve as the baseline for the preparation of GPDP; but this is not taking place. Each Panchayat is mandatorily required to link the activities taken up in the GPDP with the gaps identified in the MA Survey, but the gaps identified in MA Survey are not addressed in majority of the GPDPs so far(See Table. 1 for details regarding the percentage of gaps addressed by GPs in their GPDPs). Even those GPs that completed MA Survey have not incorporated Gap Reports in the final GPDP.

It is evident from the Table 1 that in the first three financial years, the count and percentage of GPs that addressed the MA Gaps in their respective GPDPs were relatively negligible (less than one per cent). One of the major reasons behind this is the deficit in awareness regarding MA Survey and its linkage with GPDP[41]. However, since 2020-21, there has been a marked change in the gaps addressed as the MoPR issued stringent guidelines to the state to address this missing link between MA Gap Reports and GPDP, In the case of 2021-22, it is still underway and so a final analysis is not possible now. The gaps in the sectors of sanitation, roads, education and drinking water have been widely addressed by the GPs in their respective GPDPs. It is observed that the intervention in these sectors is relatively easy. Moreover, the GPs had earlier experiences in such sectors and therefore it is quite simple to address the gaps such sectors. The year 2020-21 and the ongoing 2021-22 have shown marked improvement in terms of addressing gaps, but there is no shift in the sectors. It is quiet shocking to find that majority of the GPs have not addressed the gaps under sectors in which they have direct responsibility and command. For instance, management of burials and burial grounds, fuel and fodder are some of the sectors where GPs are directly involved yet failed to identify the gaps and address it in their GPDP. On the other side, sectors such as 'administrative and technical support' may be a difficult terrain in which addressing the gaps is beyond the normal capacity of the GPs. The priority of the sectors also is a factor for addressing the gaps and it has a direct correlation **(**Annexure. 1).

We have conducted intensive field work in three phases on GPDP in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Odisha in December 2018, December 2019, and January 2020. In Tamil Nadu, 10 GPs each were selected randomly from Cuddalore and Villupuram districts. All the 20 selected GPs had conducted the MA Survey and prepared gap reports. It is

Table 1: Details of GPs with MA Gaps addressed in their GPDPs

Year	No. of GPs with sectoral specific activity in respective GPDP	No. of GP with MA gaps addressed	% of GPs with MA gaps addressed
2017-18	1092519	476	0.04
2018-19	1161100	849	0.07
2019-20	1400100	3139	0.22
2020-21	1411322	161229	11.42
2021-22	1354686	125648	9.28

Source: *Computed from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India.*

MA Website. Data as on June 23, 2021.

seen that none of them had made the groupings into 'critically important', 'high priority, and 'desirable'. However, GPDP had been prepared in all the selected GPs. Since Tamil Nadu already prepared a five-year plan document for every GP, the preparation of GPDP became comparatively comfortable. It is also important to note that an expected level of support could mobilize from the line departments in the process. All the selected 40 GPs in Karnataka (10 GPs randomly selected from Chamarajanagar, Chikkaballapura, Kolar and Ramanagar districts) had completed MA Survey and out of it only three had done the groupings and accommodated the Survey results and gaps in the GPDP. It was found that out of the 60 selected GPs in Odisha (10 GPs each randomly selected from Bargarh, Boudh, Jharsaguda, Nuapada, Sambalpur and Sonepur districts), only 50 had conducted MA Survey but no attempts were made to classify the results in three groups to show the intensity of the gaps. While preparing the GPDP, the gaps were not addressed.

During this exercise, it was found that PPC for GPDP and MA Survey have been dealt with in a separate manner. Even after completion of the survey, they just placed it before the Special GS without making any presentations, discussions, validation, and feedback. So, neither the GP functionaries nor the local citizens were able to understand the connection between GPDP and MA. The Centre for Rural Management (CRM) team found during field visits to GPs in Karnataka, Odisha and Kerala that both GPDP and MA have not been properly understood by the Panchayat functionaries. In majority of the cases, the GPDP and MA Survey were dealt with in an unconnected manner. There have also been instances where GPs first prepared GPDP and after that completed MA Survey. Even those GPs that have showcased better performance in MA Surveys, does not mean that stakeholders in the Panchayat are aware about the process. We have a concrete example to illustrate the above situation. The Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development and Research (CMDR), Dharwad, Karnataka conducted a national seminar on "Decentralized Governance and Planning and its Impact on Economic Development and Social Justice" during March 28 – 29, 2019. There was a separate section on "Operational Aspects and Field Perception of GPDP." Presidents and Panchayat Development Officers (PDOs) of the GPs from three best performing Panchayats, in the district of Dharwad had attended the seminar. However, none of them could explain about the MA Survey, gap reports and its connection with GPDP. They were not even aware of the score value obtained by the respective GPs in the MA Survey. Moreover, the result of the survey had been uploaded in the website of MoPR by the GPs themselves. So how can such things

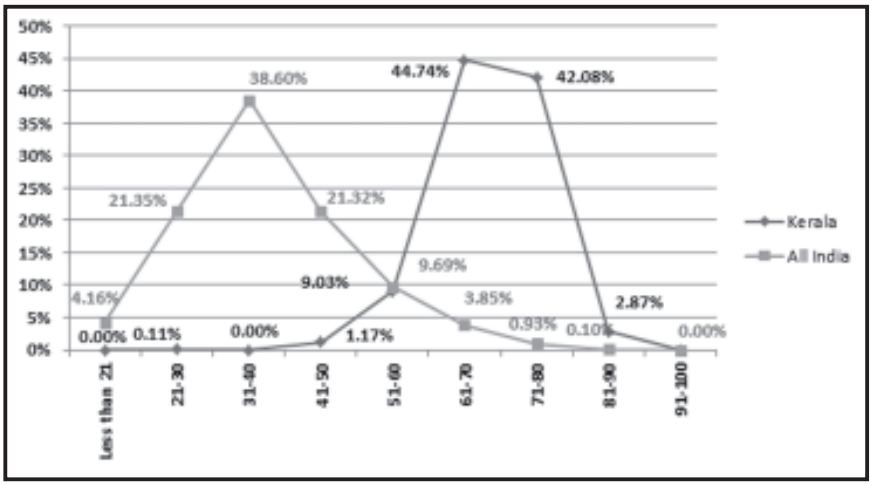
happen? It might seem unbelievable how the frontline stakeholders who claim to be part and parcel of the MA survey are not in a position to recollect score value or explain the process.

According to Fifth Common Review Mission 2019[42] by MoRD, it was found that Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, the Gram Sabhas for GPDP are held without proper understanding of the process. It also points out that GPDPs in these states look more like wish-lists and also do not reflect gaps or priorities listed under MA. The Review Mission also observed that there is low awareness regarding GPDP in the Northeastern States like Manipur and Meghalaya. Another major criticism of MA is regarding the methodology involved in the case, In GPs with more than one village, the average had been taken as the score value for that Panchayat. In other words, if there are many villages, which are not coterminous with the GPs, in such cases, the average score value of the villages may not reflect the true value of any of the villages. Therefore, it is difficult to incorporate the gaps in the GPDP.

Mission Antyodaya in Kerala

In the first phase of the MA Survey in 2017, 195 GPs were covered (with *Kudumbashree* as the nodal agency) in Kerala. In 2018 (continuation of the first phase), 939 out of 941 GPs in Kerala completed the survey. At the national level, the 2017 & 2018 MA Survey was conducted in 2,47,910 GPs. While 229 GPs across India managed to secure a score between 91 to 100, none of the GPs in Kerala figured in the same score range. Meanwhile, in Kerala, out of the 939 GPs that have uploaded the status, 905 GPs (96.30 %) scored in the range above 60 and out of this 91 GPs scored a high value in the range of 81 to 90. In Kerala, out of the 941 GPs that have uploaded the MA Survey in 2019, nearly 2.87 per cent GPs scored in the range of 81 to 90 while only 0.10 per cent GPs across India fall in the same score range. Since 2019, the Department of Economics and Statistics[43] and Directorate of Panchayats are the nodal agencies for MA Survey in the state. In the 2019 MA Survey nearly 42.08 per cent Panchayats in Kerala came within the score range of 71 – 80 and 44.74 per cent in the range of 61 – 70. On the other hand, only 0.93 per cent GPs across India fall in the score range of 71- 80 and 3.85 per cent GPs in the country in the score range of 61-70. It is seen that both the high achievement of human development in Kerala and the poor record at the national level are reflected in the MA survey (Figure 4).

Figure 4: MA Survey 2019:
Grouping of GPs Based on Score Range (India & Kerala)



Source: *Computed and Compiled by the Authors from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India.*

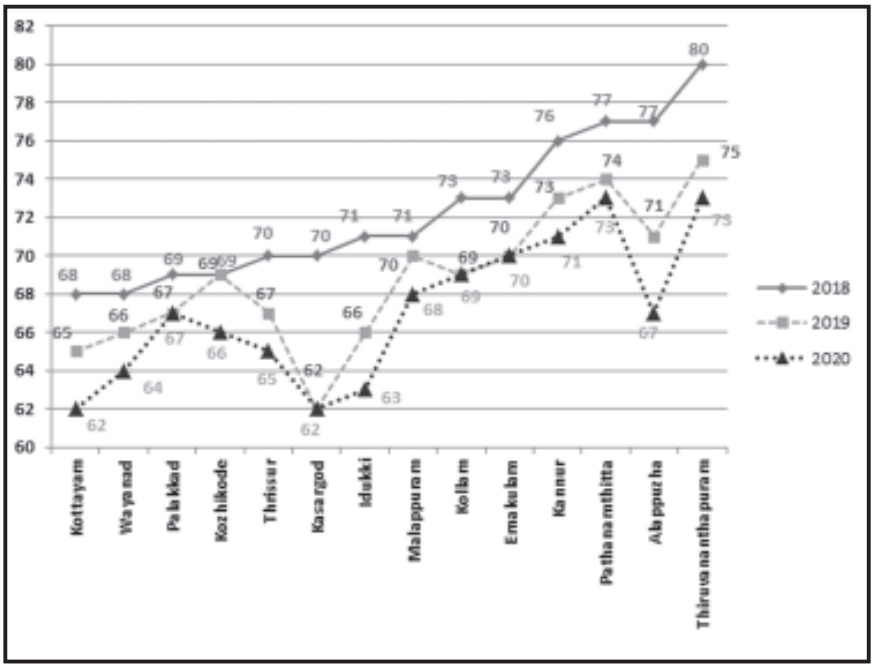
As per the MA Survey, in 2020, none of the GPs in India figured in the score range of 91 – 100. In the case of Kerala, only six panchayats figured in the score range of 81 – 90 while 260 GPs across India scored in the same score range. A total of 329 GPs in Kerala fall under the score range of 71-80 in the 2020 MA Survey.

How the Districts in Kerala fared in Mission Antyodaya (2017 – 2020)

Thiruvanthapuram district has fared better in terms of average score obtained under MA Survey in 2018, 2019 and 2020. It is followed by Pathanamthitta and Kannur in all the three years. In the year, 2017 and 2018, all the districts have obtained an average score between 68 and 80, but in 2019 and 2020, the average score started coming down (Figure. 5). According to the MA Website of MoPR, in 2017 and 2018 MA Surveys, Alamcode and Marancheri GPs in Malappuram district secured a score of 89 and got the 12th rank at National Level. In Thiruvanthapuram district 35 GPs fall under the score range of 81 – 90. In the same year, ten GPs in Pathanamthitta district and eight GPs in Kannur district also secured a score between 81 – 90. In the MA Survey 2019, 27 GPs from Kerala made it to the 81 – 90 score range. As per the MA Website of MoPR, Kalliyoor GP in Thiruvanthapuram district is at the 5th spot with a score of 85. Kottukal GP in

Thriuvanathapuram and Alamcode GP in Malappuram have secured 6th rank with a score of 84. In 2020 MA Survey only six GPs figured in the 81 – 90 score range. Alathur GP in Palakkad district is at the 6th rank with a score value of 85. A total of 329 GPs in Kerala were categorized in the score range of 71-80 in the survey (Figure 5).

Figure 5: MA Survey 2018, 2019 & 2020: District Wise Average Score of Kerala



***Source**: Computed and Compiled by the Authors from the website of Mission Antyodaya, MoPR, Government of India.*

Does Mission Antyodaya (MA) Reflect Ground Reality in Kerala?

Kerala enjoys top position among Indian states with respect to the Human Development Index (HDI)[44]. As per the 2005 Human Development Report of Kerala[45], the HDI of the state has increased from 0.685 in 1991 to 0.773 in 2001. The same uniform distribution of development can be observed in the case of district wise human development indices of Kerala as all lie above 0.740. In fact, Ernakulam district comes out with a HDI as high as 0.80, followed by Kottayam (0.796), Pathanamthitta (0.795), Alappuzha (0.794), Thrissur (0.794), Kollam (0.787), Kannur (0.783), Kozhikode (0.781) and

Thiruvanthapuram (0.773). Malappuram district had obtained the lowest index of 0.749 but not way behind districts of Wayanad with 0.753 and Idukki with 0.754. Though the HDI is from 2005 and the focal points were districts and not GPs, it does reflect a better view of Kerala. The MA Survey is somewhat equal to the HDI. For instance, Thiruvanthapuram district has fared better in terms of average score value obtained (80, 75, 73 respectively) under MA Survey in 2018, 2019 and 2020. It is followed by Pathanamthitta (with an average score value of 77, 74, 73), Alappuzha (with an average score of 77, 71 and 67) and Kannur (with an average score of 76, 73, 71) in all the three years. In the year, 2017 and 18, all the districts have obtained an average score between 68 and 80, but in 2019 and 2020, the average score started coming down. Some may argue that HDI index ranks only districts and state and not GPs. However, despite these arguments and problems, the MA Survey has been successful in measuring development and progress at the grassroot level. Talking about the HDI in Kerala, after 2005 there have been no attempts to document the district wise HDI for the state of Kerala. Though there is a Kerala Development Report,[46] the latest one of which was released in February 2020, it has not incorporated District Wise Index. In such a context, the MA Survey in Kerala has more significance.

A Critique of Mission Antyodaya (MA) in the Context of Kerala

The state of Kerala has been a forerunner in the realm of decentralization in India. The PPC in 1996 has been considered as a far reaching and radical experiment in grassroots level planning. The MA does have the potential to take decentralization to the next level in the case of Kerala, but the state has failed to make use of it. It is true that a few of the GPs in Kerala have topped in the MA Surveys since 2017. As per the MoPR Guidelines, there shall be a State Nodal Officer, appointed by the State Governments and can also appoint state- level resource persons. In Kerala, for the first 2017 MA Survey, the *Kudumbashree* was appointed as the nodal agency. There were many allegations against the unprofessional manner in which the exercise was carried out by the *Kudumbashree*. The survey results of the 195 GPs may not reflect the true situation. There is a general tendency in the state to deploy *Kudumbashree* for various assignments without considering the professional competency of the organization. This is a part of distributing political patronage to a larger constituency for electoral reasons. It has also an advantage of economic benefit by employing women to conduct the survey on low wages. As a result, *Kudumbashree* was replaced in the second and third phases of the survey by the Department of Economics and Statistics as the nodal agency.

Kerala is one of the states in India having a well-organized statistical system. The department has a well-qualified staff deputed in all the line departments and field level statistical investigators. A total of 811 field investigators have been appointed for data collection and compilation. The Chief, Decentralized Planning Division, Kerala State Planning Board, is in charge of the overall monitoring of MA. At the district level, the Deputy Director, Economics and Statistics Department and Deputy Director of Panchayats are entrusted with the task of monitoring MA. Additional Development Commissioner (General) and District Planning Officer are also part of this at the district level. At the taluk level, out of the 77 taluks only 61 of them have taluk level officers to oversee MA Survey. At the block level, there is one Extension Officer for Planning and Monitoring of MA Survey.

As per the MoPR guidelines, for data collection and field level enumeration of MA Survey, the services of Gram Rozgar Sevaks (GRSs), Community Resource Persons (CRPs), GP level functionaries as well as volunteers can be availed. The 2020 – 21 guidelines indicate that the state governments may also involve students of higher educational institutions in this planning exercise. These students would also get training along with the CRPs and GRSs. The field enumerators are expected to interact with ward member/Sarpanch, GP Secretary, elected office bearers, anganwadi workers, health workers, school teachers, village revenue officials, NGOs, frontline workers of other line departments, representatives of community-based organizations etc. and collect information. However, in Kerala, the staff of Department of Economics and Statistics, the present nodal agency, is doing the role of field enumerators rather than the local grassroot level actors as prescribed in the guidelines. One or two staff members from the Department of Economics and Statistics are entrusted the responsibility to conduct the MA Survey[47]. As per the guidelines, it is the panchayat functionaries, CRPs or other grassroot workers who have to work as field enumerators for carrying out the Survey but here the state nodal agency is doing all the job from collection to uploading of the MA data. The guidelines clearly mention that the state nodal agency, state resource persons and district resource persons have to monitor and oversee the progress of Survey done at the GP level. Under such a system Panchayats have little or no information about MA and its relevance. For instance, for ensuring data quality, during MA Survey, two stages of data quality check were adopted: one, validation by Gram Sabha (GS) and the other, verification by Block Development Officers (BDOs). After completion of the survey, the field level functionaries/ enumerators team would be required to

get all the data validated by the GS. The team would be required to download a printed copy of the information collected on each village and place it before the GS for approval. Based on the feedback, necessary changes will have to be made. But in Kerala, no such process is undertaken as the field investigator from statistical department directly uploads the MA data. While gap report is generated after the MA data is uploaded there is no evidence to suggest that the Panchayat functionaries are aware of these gap report and how they should incorporate in GPDP.

While the 5th Common Review Mission 2019 by MoRD, Government of India states that GPDP and MA is being effectively carried out in Kerala with the participation of line departments and ratification of the plans in GS, the ground reality is different. The authors of this paper found that even in a state like Kerala famed for its own unique decentralized planning, the GPDP process is carried out without proper understanding of the process. GPDP is interpreted in two different ways in Kerala. The official stand among decentralization experts and officials are that GPDP is all about the entire planning framework and process under 1996 PPC and for GPs and the annual plan document modelled on PPC is uploaded in a software called *Sulekha*[48]. For the functionaries of the GPs, the GPDP means listing the projects funded by Union Finance Commissions and uploading it in *Plan Plus*[49]. In the case of MA too, the 5th Common Review Mission states that Kerala is a better performer and it appears to be true given the fact that the state stand in a better stead in terms of national average and state average. However, much like the case of GPDP, even MA is carried out with no proper understanding and the elected functionaries and officials of the GPs have no Knowledge regarding MA. The only exception is that the secretaries and plan clerks of the GPs do know that MA exists but if you ask them what the scheme is all about and what it is intended for, they are unable to explain the process and its relevance. Meanwhile, in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and strict adherence to social distancing norms, it may not be feasible to place the data before GS. In such circumstance, the collected dataset may be validated by the GP committee. Further, as social distancing norms are relaxed, GS-validation must be obtained post facto. The verification stage by BDOs shall be followed as in the previous year. It is also important to note that centrally sponsored schemes including rural development schemes are also becoming 'tensed areas' of central – state relations under the so-called co-operative federalism. Kerala has also failed to adopt MA as a value-added quality intervention to its 1996 PPC. The decentralization experts, academic community, policy makers, civil

society organizations including media have totally failed to understand the potential of MA in taking the decentralization experience to a whole new dimension.

Conclusion

The MA is a rational scientific attempt to document and measure development at the grassroot level. The voluminous data obtained as part of the MA Survey opened a wide platform for 'big data analysis' and such an initiative is a novel one even in the realm of world literature on decentralized planning. But India as a whole and Kerala in particular have failed to make use of its potential. One of the main reasons for this is due to poor awareness regarding the GPDP and the MA. The elected functionaries, officials of Panchayats and stakeholders do not have any clear idea regarding MA. Kerala may be in a better position than other states in terms of national average score but that doesn't mean the majority panchayats in Kerala are involved in the process and methodology in MA. Kerala adopted a mechanical and bureaucratic approach instead of a participatory approach envisaged by MoPR. The general opinion is that the guidelines issued for preparing GPDP and MA are too complex for the frontline stakeholders to understand. It is like so much information stuffed in one single book and as a result they are reluctant to go through these guidelines. There have also been reports from across India that the GPDP planning process is too cumbersome. The shortage of manpower and vacancies at GP level needs to be addressed for conducting MA Survey and GPDP. While programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) enjoys success and acceptance, MA, a brand-new version to alleviate poverty in rural India has failed to gain the same recognition and popularity. The gap assessment and identification through MA has to serve as the cornerstone for preparing GPDP, but it is not happening. Irrespective of the shortcomings in the process involved in the MA Survey, its results approximated the HDI of Kerala.

The reasons for the less popularity or IEC campaigns for PPC and GPDP is another pertinent question that needs to be addressed. When MA was launched, many in the policy circles thought it was an advanced version of the 1971 *Grabi Hatao*, a populistic measure introduced by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Despite being launched by the BJP government, the political ownership is completely missing. While schemes like SBM have been getting political endorsement and even enormous funds for carrying out IEC activities, the same clamour and enthusiasm is missing in the case of PPC, GPDP

and the MA. It is also interesting to note that while there are a number of schemes named after Mahatma Gandhi, and many of them performing well, MA, a concept close to Gandhi's heart, is not getting due recognition and mass popularity. Gandhi's ideas on Gram Swaraj and his talisman reflect MA values: "Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away".[50]

Annexure 1: Sectors in which the number of GPs with MA Gaps addressed from zero to highest.

Year	Sectors in which the number of GPs with MA Gaps addressed is zero	Sectors in which the number of GPs with MA Gaps addressed is higher
2021-22	1. Administrative & Technical Support 2. GP Office Infrastructure 3. Social Welfare 4. Tribal Welfare 5. Welfare of the weaker sections	1. Sanitation (27%) 2. Roads (22%) 3. Drinking water (20%) 4. Education (7%)
2021-21	1. Administrative & Technical Support 2. GP Office Infrastructure 3. Social Welfare 4. Tribal Welfare 5. Welfare of the weaker sections	1. Roads (26%) 2. Sanitation (26%) 3. Drinking water (18%) 4. Education (8%)
2019-20	1. Administrative & Technical Support 2. GP Office Infrastructure 3. Small-scale industries 4. Social Welfare 5. Tribal Welfare 6. Welfare of the weaker sections	1. Roads (33%) 2. Sanitation (19%) 3. Drinking water (15%) 4. Education (8%)

2018-19	1. Administrative & Technical Support 2. Adult and non-formal education 3. Animal husbandry 4. Burials and burial grounds 5. Fuel and fodder 6. GP Office Infrastructure 7. Planning for economic and social development 8. Poverty alleviation programme 9. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks 10. Public amenities including street lighting 11. Public distribution system 12. Regulation of land-use and construction of buildings 13. Regulation of slaughterhouses and tanneries 14. Roads and bridges 15. Small-scale industries 16. Social welfare 17. Tribal Welfare 18. Welfare of the weaker sections	1. Roads (43%) 2. Maintenance of community system (12%) 3. Education (9%) 4. Drinking water (9%) 5. Sanitation (8%)

2017-18	1. Administrative & Technical Support 2. Adult and non-formal education 3. Animal husbandry 4. Burials and burial grounds 5. Fuel and fodder 6. GP Office Infrastructure 7. Planning for economic and social development 8. Poverty alleviation programme 9. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks 10. Public amenities including street lighting 11. Public distribution system 12. Regulation of land-use and construction of buildings 13. Regulation of slaughterhouses and tanneries 14. Roads and bridges 15. Small-scale industries 16. Social welfare 17. Tribal Welfare 18. Welfare of the weaker sections	1. Roads (43%) 2. Maintenance of community system (13%) 3. Rural electrification (9%) 4. Sanitation (8%) 5. Drinking Water (7%) 6. Education (6%)

Source: *Computed from Mission Antyodaya Website. Data as on June 23, 2021.*

Notes and References

1. The then Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley presented the budget on February 1, 2017. See Union Budget Speech 2017, Government of India. Then on August 9, 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a call to free India from poverty while speaking on a special discussion to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the 'Quit India Movement' in Lok Sabha. He placed a challenge of eliminating poverty by the time of country's 75th Independence Anniversary in 2022.
2. At present, there are a total of 54 Union Ministries in India under the political regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi including the recently formed Ministry of Co-operation, launched on July 5,2021.
3. Modi administration has always emphasized on access to the government's individual benefit schemes through a "saturation" coverage mode. Saturation approach signifies total coverage of a village or targeted population (rural) with a number of interventions or developmental schemes, so that with the passage of time, every household, with the support of such interventions is able to overcome poverty and deprivation, and the covered population of the area is able to lead a socially & economically dignified life.
4. The Union Government in 2018 launched a national level PPC under the slogan *Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas*. The planning process experimented under the 1996 PPC in Kerala has been scaled up to the national level in the form of PPC for GPDP in 2018. The PPC is an effective strategy for ensuring the preparation of GPDP in a campaign mode. Meanwhile it is interesting to note that though the 1996 PPC in Kerala relied on primary and secondary data it was never used for generating customized gap reports and addressing them as in the case of MA gap reports and incorporating into GPDP.
5. GPDP preparation is a planning for strengthening GP to drive economic development and social justice and thereby transforming rural India. It is a comprehensive need-based development plan for accelerated multi-dimensional integrated growth of the respective Panchayat area. GPDP has to be comprehensive to capture important needs, gaps, activities, perspective plan, annual operational plan etc.
6. SECC 2011 was the first caste-based census since 1931. SECC 2011 was launched on June 29, 2011, by the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. It was also the first paperless census conducted in India. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) uses the SECC data in all programmes such as MGNREGS and PMAY (G).
7. (I)Households with only one room, (ii) Kucha walls and Kucha roof, (iii) no adult member between the ages of 16 and 59, (iv) female headed households with no adult male member between 16 and 59, (v) households with disabled member and no able-bodied adult member in SC/ST household, (vi) households with no literate adult

above 25 years, (vii) landless households deriving a major part of their income from MCL.

8. John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) established his reputation as Britain's foremost art and architectural historian in the nineteenth century. See, John Ruskin, *Unto This Last: Four Essays on the First Principles of Political Economy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1862).
9. M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1938).
10. See, M K Gandhi, *Young India,* 23.4.1931; 46:12.
11. BJP is one of the major political parties in India. As of 2019, it is country's largest political party in terms of representation in the Parliament and State Assemblies. BJP is ruling the country since 2014. The origin of the BJP lies in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formed in 1951 by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.
12. RSS is an Indian right – wing Hindu nationalist paramilitary volunteer organisation founded on September 27, 1925.
13. In 1977, after the Internal Emergency was removed Jana Sangh merged with several other parties to form the Janata Party. It was founded in collaboration with the Hindu Nationalist volunteer organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In the 1977 general elections, Janata Party, defeated the Congress party. In 1980 the Janata Party dissolved with the members of Jana Sangh reconvening to form BJP.
14. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, *Integral Humanism* (India: Hindi Sahitya Sadan, Sixth Edition, 2014).
15. At present, the MA Website says that, the vision of MA is to make "Poverty Free India" by 2022.
16. Budget 2017. Government of India, New Delhi.
17. The aim of this mission is to provide tap water to all households by 2024.
18. Niranjan Sahoo, "Even after 20 years, Decentralisation Still Remains a Challenge". *Observer Research Foundation*, May 4, 2013. URL retrieved *https://www.orfonline.org/research/even-after-20-years-decentralisation-still-remains-a-challenge/*
19. The commission's chairman was former Reserve Bank of India governor Y. V. Reddy, and its members were Sushma Nath, M. Govinda Rao, Abhijit Sen, Sudipto Mundle, and A.N. Jha. The recommendations of the commission entered force on April 2015.
20. There is a wrong assumption that elected functionaries are not that functionally literate and believe they lack sufficient capacity and experience in handling enormous amounts. Often credibility deficit of elected functionaries is treated as a major barrier for devolution.
21. Nidhi Sharma, "How Gram Panchayat Development Plan is changing the villages of India", *Economic Times*. 30 July 2016. URL retrieved: *https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/how-gram-panchayat-development-plan-is-changing-the-villages-of India.*
22. 14th FC: para 9.69. Here, it is important to note that 14th FC had been

hailed as path-breaking for recommending larger fund allocations to local governments and giving them more autonomy. The allocation to local governments was over twice the amount recommended by the 13th FC and for municipalities it was nearly three times (Meera Mehta and Dinesh Mehta, 2015).

23. In paragraph 9.56 of the 14th FC
24. 14th FC: para 2.37
25. D Ravindra Prasad; & V Srinivas Chary "Trust-Based Approach for Local Bodies: Fourteenth Finance Commission," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 50, no. 52 (2015), pp 19–22.
26. According to the Devolution Index (DI) Report (2016 -2017) prepared by Centre for Rural Management (CRM) Kottayam, Kerala, the uneven distribution of decentralization across various states in India was observed. For instance, Karnataka has the highest score value of 74. 35 and Jammu and Kashmir had the lowest score with 27.85. The trend of uneven decentralization among states is reflected in the earlier DI Reports prepared by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPM) and National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).
27. Report of the 14th FC. p.115. Also see, Jos Chathukulam and Manasi Joseph, "Integrating GPDP into the District Plan", in *Gram Panchayat Development Planning in India,* ed. Rajesh Kumar Sinha (New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications, 2021).
28. Ministry of Finance (MoF) has issued guidelines for the utilization of 14th FC grants towards O& M under capital expenditure. In the guidelines of MoF it has been stated. "The FFC has taken a view that the measures recommended including the grants to the local governments should go towards supporting and strengthening their primary functions to deliver basic services as improvements in the quality of basic services is likely to an increase in the willingness of the citizens to pay for the services. Therefore, it is advised that all expenditure incurred by Panchayats and Municipalities on basic services within the functions devolved to them under the state laws may be incurred after proper plans are prepared by Panchayats and Municipalities in accordance with the relevant rules, regulations, processes, and procedures applicable in the state."
29. A five - day write - shop for participatory planning for GPDP at KILA, Kerala was held from 8-13 July 2015 (27 states participated). The first author participated in the event as a resource person.
30. A three-day workshop was held in Guwahati on GPDP for the North Eastern States (Six States participated) from 28-30 September 2015. The first author participated in the event as a resource person.
31. It is argued that some aspects of the 1996 Kerala Model PPC has been scaled up to the National level in the formulation of GPDP guidelines. See Jos Chathukulam, "25 Years of People's Plan Campaign in Kerala", Mainstream, Vol LIX, No. 35 (14 August 2021). (URL Retrieved: http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article11410.html)

32. The Fifth Schedule designates tribal majority areas in ten tribal minority states Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
33. The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 or PESA is a law enacted by the Government of India for ensuring self-governance through traditional Gram Sabhas for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India. The Scheduled Areas were not covered by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment or Panchayati Raj Act of the Indian Constitution as provided in the Part IX of the Constitution. PESA was enacted on December 24, 1996.
34. Harijan, 21-12-47, p. 473
35. States may utilize funds from IEC component of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), administrative cost from 14th FC awards or other appropriate sources for this purpose.
36. The official document of the MoPR (2020-2021) claims that 80.23 % of GPs had installed the public information boards but many GPs are not very clear what should be uploaded in the GPDP website of MoPR. For example, in Kumarakom GP in Kottayam, Kerala, there is nothing in the so- called public information board image section of the Website of MoPR but a photograph of the GP President distributing some incentives to local citizens.
37. *PlanPlus* is a software developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) under guidance and direction from MoPR, in order to demystify and strengthen the decentralized planning process. The software is a web-based and captures the entire planning workflow starting from identification of needs to the plan approval process.
38. Mission Antyodaya Website
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Vanishree Joseph, "Use of Mission Antyodaya Data for GPDP", in *Gram Panchayat Development Planning in India,* ed. Rajesh Kumar Sinha (New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications, 2021). Also see, *Performance of Mission Antyodaya Gram Panchayats – A Quick Mid-term Assessment Study to track the Progress, 2018,* National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad.
42. The 5th Common Review Mission was organized by MoRD from 4th to 14th November 2019. The Review Missions are being commissioned by the MoRD since 2016, to have an independent assessment of the implementation of various rural development schemes and to identify areas of further improvement.
43. The first author interviewed Mr. P Venu, Director, Department of Economics and Statistics on June 27, 2021. The author also interviewed Ms. Sreelakha PR, Research Officer, Department of Economics and Statistics, on February 14, 2020.
44. In the Human Development Index of India, Kerala's rating is 0.790

is the highest in the country resulting mainly from the vast improvements the state has made in the fields of sanitation, health, education, and poverty-reduction. The India Human Development Report, 2011, prepared by Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi, placed Kerala on top of the index for achieving highest literacy rate, quality health services and consumption expenditure of people.

45. Prepared by Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Kerala.
46. Prepared by the State Planning Board, Government of Kerala.
47. The first author of this paper talked to Mr.Agish B, the field investigator who conducted MA Survey in Njeezhur GP on October 13, 2020 and on June 20, 2021 to Mr. Sarath Damodran who served as field investigator for the Survey in two GPs (Kuravilangad and Maravanthurathu) in Kottayam district. Moreover, A focus group discussion (FGD) of eight field investigators were held from Appapuzha district on October 15,2020.
48. *Sulekha* is the Plan monitoring software developed by Information Kerala Mission (IKM) for the Govt of Kerala for the projects of the local governments.
49. The authors of this paper visited 10 GPs each in 14 districts of Kerala in January 7, 8, 9, 10 and February 1, 2, 3, 4,2021. The data uploaded in the *Plan Plus* software by the visited GPs consisted of only projects funded by 15th FC grants and they call it as GPDP. In other words, at GP level they scull out those projects that were funded using the grants provided by the 15th FCs and uploads it in *Plan Plus* to mechanically fulfill the requirement for the MoPR . The same exercise had been done at the state level by generating required data from the *Sulekha* software under 14th FC. In short, the *Plan Plus* data in the website of MoPR from Kerala has to be treated with this caution that it includes only on projects that were financed from Union FCs. To illustrate the picture, we have taken the case of Maravanthurathu GP in Vaikom Block, Kottayam where the annual plan outlay for 2020- 2021 is Rs. 8,85,47,054 whereas only Rs. 1,09,8000 (12.40 %) is uploaded as GPDP. This is the case with other GPs.
50. M. K. Gandhi, The *Last Phase,* by Pyarelal, Vol. II (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958), p. 65.

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Violence, Nonviolence and Less Violence: Savarkar's Encounter with Gandhi

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ABSTRACT

Both Savarkar and Gandhi understand that the rule of history is violence, and nonviolence is the exception to this rule. Savarkar wanted to build his nation on the foundation of this rule of history whereas Gandhi wanted to make the exception – nonviolence –as the new rule of his future nation. Savarkar who defends violence against injustice as inevitable accuses Gandhi for his preaching of absolute nonviolence, which in turn damaged the material strength of the nation, according to him. But Savarkar's misreading of Gandhi stems from his failure to comprehend the unique praxis of Gandhi's political instruments. Moreover, Gandhi's idea of nonviolence is more intertwined with the realities of violence than Savarkar's vision of less violent nation. This paper seeks to critically examine and expose the vulnerabilities of Savarkar's political encounter with Gandhi's ideas of nonviolence and nation.

Key words: Violence, absolute nonviolence, nationalism, Savarkar, Gandhi

Introduction

NO HISTORY IS monolithic. Any monochromatic narration of selected historical events would most probably be an intended act for political concert. As E H Carr rightly observed that it is important to study the historian before beginning to learn historical facts.[1]Historians cook and serve facts in whatever style appeal to

them.[2]Reading Savarkar's version of Indian history also demand this pre-requisite. The relation between Savarkar's ideas of history and rationality alludes to one of his ways of dealing with historical facts and their encounter with his own emotions. Religion has an inalienable coexistence with politics in Savarkar's account of history. But, does this effort to record history from a religious standpoint upset religious harmony? In an earlier work on Marathas, in *Hindu Pad Padashahi* (1925), he clarifies these points. For him, writing history strictly from a rational standpoint is not always possible. Savarkar finds no ethical issues when the historian relates himself with the emotion of actors involved in events. The historian is hardly concerned about the political consequences of such depictions of history. In that sense, as a historian, Savarkar successfully breaches the strict boundaries of positivist methodologies of historiography. Savarkar writes:

> To our Muhammadan readers, however, a word of explanation is needed. The duty of a Historian is primarily to depict as far as possible the feelings, motives, emotions and actions of the actors themselves whose deed he aims to relate. This he cannot do faithfully and well, unless he, for the time being, rids himself not only of all prejudices and prepossessions but even of the fears of the consequences the story of the past might be calculated to have on the interests of the present.[3]

A hermeneutical understanding of Savarkar's political ideas allows us to unravel puzzles surrounding his ideas of nation and violence. In this essay we try to expose the representation of violence in the nationalist thought of Savarkar. His ideas of justifiable violence, cultural nationalism, relationship between politics and religion, and his criticism against the excessive preaching of absolute nonviolence and its implications are also briefly discussed in the essay. One of the core objectives of the essay is to critically examine and expose vulnerabilities of Savarkar's political encounter with Gandhi's ideas of nonviolence and nation. Let us begin with the discussion on Savarkar's approach to violence and its inevitability in his future nation.

Glorious Violence

Savarkar's last text *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History,* which was a commentary on Indian history, unravels his notions of violence and nonviolence and their implications on his future nation. Savarkar's history of India – the panorama of rise and fall of Hindu rulers – glorified the Hindu rulers who were the defenders of the land from foreign aggressions. "Glorious epochs", in his words represented "the history of that warlike generation and the brave leaders and successful

warriors who inspire and lead it on to a war of liberation in order to free their nation from the shackles of foreign domination"[4]. The nation was "absolutely free and sovereign" only under the rule of those who had waged war of liberation against the foreign invaders. Hence, for him, the freedom and sovereignty of the nation was protected only under the shadow of powerful arms in the history of India.

Savarkar categorically justified violence for the righteous cause in which the nation had to be defended against the unjustifiable aggression by aliens. For him, the "righteous war" cannot be considered as a form of violence. He writes, "The war, which beats down unjustifiable aggression, protects the virtuous people and destroys the wicked ones, is never considered 'violent' by the Vedic religion. It is called a religious war (a righteous war!)"[5]. Independence of the nation can be gained only through the means of righteous war.[6]Hence, a just cause, especially to protect nation from unjust aggression justifies violence. Such righteous wars for nationalist cause were glorified in his political discourses. Savarkar changed the moral colour of such forms of violence and even refused to call it violence.

Whatever is done for a nationalist cause cannot be counted as a form of violence in Savarkar's logic. This is also evident from his narration of Pushymitra of ancient India. Savarkar writes, "Pushyamitra had simply done the unavoidable national duty of killing Asoka's descendant, Brihadrath Maurya, who had proved himself thoroughly incompetent to defend the independence of the Indian empire"[7]. Killing the "nominal Buddhist emperor" was "simply a nationalist duty" in his depiction of killing of Brihadrath Maurya by Pushyamitra. Even persecution of Buddhists was considered as a nationalist duty to overthrow traitors inside the nation. In Savarkar's narration of religious persecution by Pushyamitra, violence against innocents was not just an exception, but an inevitable exception in a national war. In Savarkar's own words, "It is likely that in the trouble times of national war the chastisement of the disloyal Buddhists might have affected some of the innocent ones. But it was not a rule—but an inevitable exception!"[8] Savarkar had a clear perception on what was good violence, inevitable too, in a glorified nationalist history. Gandhi's means-end schema has nothing to do with the Savarkar's thesis. Let us briefly discuss some of the characteristics of the notion of violence in Gandhi's political discourses.

Gandhi categorically stated that human beings have no right to do violence under any circumstances. He writes, "I shall believe that the man not have been given the power of creation does not possess the right of destroying the meanest creature that lives."[9]Possibility of fallibility in human judgments is the founding stone of his rejection of

violence. In a first reading, Gandhi's rejection of violence seems absolute, though his political instruments were not completely nonviolent. Gandhi found anger, selfishness, lust etc. as the roots of violence, no matter whether it was justified or not.

Unlike Savarkar, Gandhi refuted the right to do righteous violence, even against injustice. For him, violence is always bad and need to be condemned. However, he made it clear that a believer in *ahimsa* has the duty to side with those who defend violence, and should not cooperate with the perpetrator.[10] Nevertheless, no right to revenge is vested upon the defenders. His refutation of *Gita's* misreading as glorification of violence is also founded upon the complete rejection of the idea of righteous or good violence. He writes:

> I do not believe in that the *Gita* teaches violence for doing good. It is pre-eminently a description of the duel that goes on in our own hearts. The divine author has used a historical incident for inculcating the lesson of doing one's duty even at the peril of one's life. It inculcates performance of duty irrespective of the consequences, for we mortals, limited by our physical frames, are incapable of controlling actions save our own. The *Gita* distinguishes between the powers of light and darkness and demonstrates their incompatibility.[11]

Relationship between human nature and violence is another important aspect in Gandhi's political discourses on nonviolence. Gandhi relates violence with lower human nature or animal spirit.

> Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law – to the strength of the spirit.[12]

People who win over the enemy through power of love means that they are following law of their nature whereas brute force is equated with law of animals. However, he agreed that, unfortunately, bulk of the people in the society were following the lower human nature of the animal world. That's why he writes that, "The rishis, who discovered the law of nonviolence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They themselves greater warriors than Wellington."[13]His political instrument of nonviolence can be read properly if we understand his assumptions on violence. It is also interesting to note the differences in the interpretation of ancient Hindu texts by Gandhi and Savarkar. Savarkar interpreted violence in the Ramayana and the Gita in literal sense as the essence of human nature. But, for Gandhi, violence in these texts served as allegories of internal

conflict in humans.[14] Having discussed the nature of violence in political discourses of both Savarkar and Gandhi, let us see how these differences were reflected in their notions of nonviolence.

Less Violence and (Absolute) Nonviolence

Savarkar was a staunch critic of the idea of *ahimsa*. He found it as one of the reasons for the defeat of the Indian nation at foreign hands. For him the idea of absolute nonviolence was a weakness of the Indian population. Hence those who resorted to nonviolence had no place in among the national heroes, and their reigns were not counted in the glorious epochs in his version of Indian history. For instance, Savarkar excluded the Maurya King Ashoka from the glorious epochs of Indian history for preaching the Buddhist principle of nonviolence. He claims that this anti-national preaching of Buddhist principle of excessive nonviolence distorted the national might. He also romanticized the political conditions in India before the spread of Buddhist preaching of *ahimsa*. He writes, "Not only the Kshatriyas there, but in some of the states all the citizens, men and women, young or old, took the field to face the aggressive foreign enemy".[15] In short, Buddhist preaching of *ahimsa* had damaged India's innate capacity to defend as a nation. This innate capacity was evident in Savarkar's citation of free access to military service for all *Varnas* in the tradition of Vedic Hindus. The impractical nonviolence was never part of the innate character of Vedic Hindus. But it is important to note that what Savarkar condemned as anti-national was not just *ahimsa*, but the "excessive propaganda for unrestricted *ahimsa*".[16]He also believed that the absolute nonviolence damaged the economic might of India. Savarkar found that the spread of *ahimsa* in Jain faith resulted in loss of profession of many groups of people such as fishermen, hunters, foresters etc. Savarkar also criticised Gandhi's idea of *satyagraha,* which was based on the principle of nonviolence. In the Madura session of Hindu Mahasabha in 1940, he rejected the principle of Gandhian nonviolence on both moral and practical grounds. He says:

> On the other hand no programme based on the monomaniacal principle of absolute non-violence is worth a moment's consideration. If the first extreme remedy of an armed rising on a National scale is ruled out on grounds of practical politics, this other extreme of absolute non-violence condemning all armed resistance even to an incorrigible aggression must be ruled out not only on practical grounds alone but even on moral grounds.[17]

Savarkar argues that it was impractical to resort to nonviolence when life of human beings was in danger. Those who resorted to

nonviolence were thereby refusing to save the life of innocent human beings. Hence, for Savarkar, the principle of absolute nonviolence was anti-human and immoral. He asserts, "relative ahimsa is a virtue; but absolute ahimsa a crime!"[18] He further argues that Gandhi was wrong in interpreting the idea of nonviolence preached in Buddhism and Jainism as absolute. Absolute nonviolence was not only anti-human and immoral, it also had no room in nature per se. In his opinion "defensive sword" was the first saviour of human beings. In his 1940 address to Hindu Mahasabha he went to the extent of saying that "the belief in absolute non-violence condemning all armed resistance even to aggression evinces no mahatmaic saintliness but a monomaniacal senselessness!"[19] For him, following the impractical and immoral strategy of nonviolence to gain independence was senseless. Hence, he wanted the Hindu population to be trained militarily to survive as a nation.

Savarkar legitimized his Hindu war policy using the parable of wars against *Rakshsas* or demons in Hindu mythology. Cruelty against demons was termed as a "holiest religious duty" and fought on both political and religious fronts.[20] But these kinds of cruel war strategies cannot be followed in a fight against Gods. Ethics of war need not be followed in a war against devils. Savarkar criticized failure of Hindus to follow the cruel war strategy against foreign invaders. Having proved that nonviolence was a failed strategy to counter the foreign aggression, he wished to militarise the Indian population for the very survival of the Nation. Savarkar asked all Hindus in his 1940 address to Hindu Mahasabha to reject the absolute nonviolence hitherto followed and exhorted them to be re-born into a martial race, which was repeated several times. He declared:

> It is in this spirit that I want all Hindus to get themselves re-animated and re-born into a martial race. Manu and Shri Krishna are our law givers and Shri Rama the Commander of our forces. Let us re-learn the manly lessons they taught us and our Hindu Nation shall prove again as unconquerable and conquering a race as we proved once when they led us: conquering those who dared to be aggressive against us and refraining ourselves, not out of weakness but out of magnanimity, from any unjustifiable designs of aggression against the unoffending.[21]

Militarization and industrialization were the immediate objectives of Hindus in Savarkar's vision of the nation. He found greatest opportunity for Hindu youths in World War II to get trained in latest military techniques. He believed that involvement of young Hindu people in the British military and their active participation in war would inculcate the martial spirit in them. He also wanted compulsory

military training to be included in the formal education. He expressed his wish to make the Hindu race "military minded, spirited and valorous".[22] "Hinduise all politics and militarize Hindudom!" was his motto at the 1942 Hindu Mahasabha session in Cawnpore. It is important to note that the boundary line between nation, politics, community and religion are too narrow in his thesis. He also appreciated the Sikh Guru Govind Singh for militarising the community against Muslim emperors. Moreover, an active military is an indispensable component of Savarkar's state without which the nation is vulnerable to foreign aggression. In short, Savarkar's vision of the future nation was never nonviolent, it was more violent than nonviolence, but less violent than violent invaders. In short, his political instruments were claimed to be less violent than that of his enemies.

Refuting the preaching of nonviolence by Gandhi as a threat to nation's might, Savarkar advanced a vision of (less) violent future nation. But was Gandhi's idea of *ahimsa* absolute? Proving Gandhian idea of nonviolence as a relative one would shake the foundations of Savarkar's criticism. But it is hard to make inferences from Gandhi's political discourses and judge whether his principle of nonviolence was absolute or relative. Let us try to identify the elements of absoluteness and relativeness in Gandhi's notion of nonviolence and find out whether Savarkar read Gandhi's political instrument of nonviolence correctly.

There were many instances in Gandhi's political discourse to substantiate that Gandhi's idea of nonviolence was not absolute. The most cited statement to establish the relativeness of nonviolence can be found in *Young India* on 11th September 1920, "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence."[23] He repeated this position many times later. He further explains:

> Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence.[24]

Hence, it is not necessarily true that Gandhi rejected violence completely under all circumstances. His choice of violence over cowardice was not limited to the sphere of interpersonal relations. He continues, "I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become

or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor."[25] In short, nonviolence didn't deter Gandhi from even supporting an armed war. He, out of his experience, explicitly stated that he supported war due to the same preference of violence over cowardice. He writes in Navajivan, "It was for this reason that I had joined Boer War and did my bit in helping the Government during the Zulu rebellion. It was for this same reason that, during the last War, I gave my help in England and in India, too. I engaged myself in recruiting work."[26]From this preference of violence over cowardice came out his classification of *ahimsa* into nonviolence of the strong and nonviolence of the weak. In a sample of examination set to himself by Gandhi pretending him to be an M A of the University of Non-Cooperation, he explains his idea of nonviolence precisely. He writes:

> Non-violence is not doing, voluntarily, any injury to person or property. Thus, I would not punish or procure punishment even of General Dyer for his massacre, but I would not call it voluntarily doing injury to him to refuse to give him pension, or to condemn his action in fitting language. It is no part of my duty to protect a murderer even though he may be my son or father. I hold it to be my duty to withdraw my support from him. I will not kill a snake, neither may harbor it.[27]

The last lines of his answer explain the balance between absoluteness and relativeness in his principle of nonviolence. This was the uniqueness of his political instrument of nonviolence. Bringing 'intention' as the scale of violence, Gandhi made his instrument of nonviolence flexible to political realities he engaged with. He states, "The final test as to its violence or nonviolence is after all the intent underlying the act."[28]

Gandhi as a self-declared practical idealist understood that violence cannot be completely eschewed from human society. He viewed violence as a natural reaction, though it represents lower human nature. He explains, "The use of force, under the circumstances, would be the natural consequence if you are not a coward."[29] Human beings are vulnerable to violence in most of the circumstances. According to Gandhi, stopping of violence is beyond human capacity. He writes, "Man does not and can never know God's law fully. Therefore, we have to try as far as lies in our power."[30]Gandhi's interpretation of *Gita* also exposes this inevitability of violence in human societies. Gandhi writes:

> If a passenger travelling in train which is running at a speed of forty miles an hour suddenly feels aversion to travelling and jumps out of the train, he will have but committed suicide. He has not in truth realized

> the futility of travelling as such or of travelling by train. Arjuna was in a similar condition. Krishna, who believed in nonviolence, could not have given Arjuna any advice other than what he did.[31]

In Gandhi's words, no one can be completely free from violence as long they carry their will to live. Gandhi writes, "All life in the flesh exists by some *himsa*. Hence the highest religion has been defined by a negative word ahimsa. The world is bound in a chain of destruction. In other words, *himsa* is an inherent necessity for life in the body."[32] Another important element which is normally interpreted in favour of relativeness in Gandhi's nonviolence is his approval of violence for self-defense. But this approval for violence for self-defense is not absolute. In his later writings, he rejects the arguments that he approved violence in self-defense. Gandhi clarifies it in his letter to Bina Das on 18th October 1928:

> I have nowhere advocated the use of physical force even for self-defence. What I have said is that the use of physical force is preferable to cowardice, that is to say, it is wrong not to use force when we have mind to do so but which we do not use because we fear to die. What I do advocate is the courage to die whether for self-defense or whether for the cause of one's country.[33]

Ending the debate on absoluteness of Gandhi's idea of nonviolence, Gandhi himself declares that, "When I say that the use of force is wrong in whatever degree and whatever circumstances, I mean it in a relative sense."[34]However, Gandhi's preaching of nonviolence purely as a principle was never relative. He argues that nonviolence as a principle cease to be a supreme law in a moment when we talk of exceptions to it. But the practice of the same principle cannot be absolute. That's why he writes, "It is much better for me to say I have not sufficient non-violence in me, than to admit exceptions to an eternal principle. Moreover my refusal to admit exceptions spurs me to perfect myself in the technique of non-violence."[35] His statements on Noakhali riots proves this point. Parel[36] was right in arguing that absolute nonviolence was not the greatest contribution of Gandhi to political philosophy. According to Parel, nonviolence was only one of the eleven virtues propounded by Gandhi. Nonviolence cannot succeed without the accomplishment of other virtues. 'Pax Gandhiana'[37]- Gandhi's peaceful political order – was not confined to the realm of politics alone. Those who judge Gandhi's nonviolence as absolute might have committed the mistake of cherry-picking Gandhi's ideas from its political, ethical and social frameworks.

In sum, it can be inferred from Gandhi's political discourses on

nonviolence and Savarkar's criticism of the same that the principle of nonviolence in which Gandhi believed was absolute, but not the practice of the same. Gandhi's experiment with the political instrument of *ahimsa* was not a linear journey from violence to nonviolence, rather from relative nonviolence to maximum possible absolute nonviolence. Failure to comprehend the praxis of this unique political instrument of Gandhi confused his critics as well as followers.

Tolerance, Sacrifice and Retaliation

The liberal perspective on violence is also attached to the idea of tolerance. Savarkar's idea on religious tolerance also reflected his perspective on violence. He was of the opinion that the tolerance of Hindus of the past towards other communities were distorted and it caused serious damage to the political dominance of Hindus. Hence Savarkar calls for an alternative notion of tolerance towards sister communities which Hindus can follow in their future nation. This new idea of tolerance is relative in nature. And, it is not independent of the attitude of other communities. He explains:

> If that alien religion is also tolerant of our own religion, our tolerance towards it can be a virtue. But the Muslim and the Christian religions, which boldly proclaim it to be their religious duty to destroy most cruelly the Hindu religion and to eradicate from the face of this earth the kafirs and the heathens, can never be described as tolerant of other religions. In respect of these intolerant foreign religions the very extremely enraged intolerance, which seeks to retaliate their atrocities with super-atrocious reprisals, itself becomes a virtue![38]

A few pages later on the same text (*Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*) he claims that Hindus always respected the Muslims as a minority in India. He also argues that Hindus always had tolerance as their policy towards other religions and always refrained from harming Muslims at the cost of their own lives. However, he comes back to his previous position on tolerance. He writes, "Religious tolerance! A virtue! Yes, it can be a virtue only where the other religion is tolerant of our own".[39] Having defined the idea of tolerance, Savarkar called the Hindu tolerance towards Islam in the past as tolerance towards "irreligion". He continues, "It was not even tolerance, it was impotence!"[40]Hence Savarkar was never in favour of absolute tolerance towards other religious communities. Like absolute nonviolence it might harm the nation and its strength and survival. In short, Savarkar advocated a policy of liberal tolerance which arises out of fear of each other. This also indicates the idea of 'less violence' in which a community or nation resort to inevitable violence against

the threat of violence from enemy community. Sharma in his article[41]terms this attitude of Savarkar as "my religion is less violent than yours". Here Savarkar's declaration is that ours is not a policy of absolute nonviolence, but we resort to retaliatory violence if the existence of our community is threatened. But he claimed that it was in fact not as cruel or violent as the past violence of the enemy communities. My religion is less violent than yours is the core justification of this new vision of religious tolerance.

Like tolerance, the idea of sacrifice is also implicit in the notion of violence. Savarkar talks of two kinds of sacrifice. "Sacrifice was adorable only when it was, directly or remotely, but reasonably, felt to be indispensable for success. Sacrifice that leads not to ultimate success is suicidal and had no place in the tactics of Maratha warfare".[42] He used this distinction to praise the sacrifices of Maratha Kings to defend the nation through righteous wars against Muslim invaders. Here he brings a binary between sacrifice of national heroes who made epochs in the history of Hindustan and other kinds of passive sacrifices. He glorified the sacrifices of national heroes who waged war to protect their land. On the contrary, sacrifices of people with nonviolence had less chance of success.

Now let us look into the nexus between idea of vengeance and violence. In *Hindu Pad Padashahi*(1925), Savarkar justified violence and plunder by Maratha force on civilians. He terms these kinds of violent events as "occasional excesses". He is ready to condemn these occasional excesses. However, he qualifies that these kinds of occasional excesses were always part of nationalist struggles[43]. This made no damage to valour of national heroes.

The literature on violence suggests that retaliation or vengeance always leverages further violence and counter violence.[44]The vicious cycle of violence can be halted only when the right of retaliation was taken away from individuals and only state had legitimate monopoly over violence. On the contrary, Savarkar justified the demands to leave the retaliatory right into the hands of common people in extra ordinary occasions. In a statement on 25th September 1947 regarding the partition-related violence he says:

> Had a Shivaji or a Ranjit Singh been at the head of the State, they could have demanded with propriety that the people should leave the right of retaliation in their hands alone But when the puny Pandit tries to demand it in the accents of Shivaji, it strikes as funny as it would do if a pigmy standing on his tiptoe tried to rival a giant in height.[45]

Retaliation or revenge (*pratishodh*) was the building block of

Savarkar's earlier work on 1857 revolt titled *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. In this text Savarkar justify the "divine vengeance" as a natural reaction to injustice[46]. He writes:

> But because very Hiranya-Kashipu has his Narasimha; because every Dushshasana has his Bheema; because every evil-doer has his avenger, there is still some hope in the heart of the world that Injustice cannot last. Such a revenge, therefore, is nature's own reaction against Injustice. And, therefore, the sin of the cruelty of that revenge rebounds on the original evil-doers.[47]

The fire of divine vengeance even justifies the instances of violence against civilians including women and children of the British during the 1857 revolt. He writes:

> Before the Sepoys who were caught in the battle of the river Kali were mounted on the scaffold, the English asked them why they had massacred their women and children. They at once retorted, "Sahib, does anyone kill a snake and let its offspring alone?" The Sepoys at Cawnpore used to say: "To extinguish the fire and leave the spark, to kill a snake and preserve its young is not the wisdom of the wise."[48]

For Savarkar, mass violence, genocides and atrocities were merely natural consequences of the passion of vengeance[49]. Savarkar's only wonder was that how these massacres and cruelties had happened only at a modest scale and confined to limited events in India. In his words, these incidents of massacres were merely "natural killings" which were part of a national and righteous war. He questioned the moral right of the English to judge on the conduct of Indian revolutionaries. Savarkar asks, "Whose was the justifiable vengeance – that of the Panday party enraged and vowing vengeance because their mother – the Country – was being ground down under oppression for a hundred years, or that of the Feringhi party which was guilty of that National oppression?"[50] He declared that the people of Hindustan had the legitimate right of "justifiable vengeance".

While ideas of sacrifice, tolerance and vengeance always had tinges of violence in it, Gandhi's political discourses reinvented these notions in favour of the principle of *ahimsa*. His mission was to make the principle of nonviolence superior to violence. Fear-strength schema is the foundation of this reinvention. In Gandhi's words, "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."[51]Gandhi found that it was the element of strength or courage that glorify those who resort to violent means whereas those who resort to nonviolence are condemned for their lack of strength or

their fear to fight. Gandhi writes in a letter to Nrisinhparasad K Bhatt, "A person who has full faith in nonviolence should be a thousand times more fearless than an armed man."[52]He establishes that it has greater powers than that of Hitler or Mussolini. Refuting all criticism against nonviolence as a weapon of the weak, Gandhi argues, "And so I am not pleading for India to practice non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practice non-violence being conscious of her strength and power."[53] He also argues that forgiveness is the virtue of the brave. Gandhi rejects violence as a means even if it is guided by intelligence. He writes, "though aided by intelligence, brute force remains brute force and law of sword remains law of the beast."[54] On the contrary, nonviolence is the firmness of mind and courage and it is also a resolute spirit. In a liberal perspective, nonviolence and tolerance come out of fear, whereas Gandhi cherishes the spirit of courage in nonviolence. He made nonviolence of the strong superior to violence and nonviolence of the weak inferior to violence.

Gandhi categorically states that we can secure or demand nothing through violence. He rejects all forms of revenge or retaliation. In his opinion, counter violence helps only in further brutalization of human nature. Gandhi preached the same during his prayer meetings following communal riots in Noakhali. In a speech at prayer meeting at Barh on 19th May, 1947, he says:

> People ask me what they should do when the Muslims indulge in such excesses; should they retaliate with two slaps in answer to one? Some persons even do it. But this is the way of the beasts. I tell you that this method retaliation and violence would not help the world, certainly not India. You have witnessed what the world has come to by following it. Germany, Italy and Japan are all ruined. Those who commit violence and instigate riots are bound to perish. This is the way of cowards. I never breach such cowardice – on the contrary I have always been teaching the lesson of true bravery.[55]

Gandhi successfully inverted the fear-strength schema in favour of his principle of *ahimsa* by making nonviolence of the strength superior to violence as well as nonviolence of the coward. He also argued that retaliation and any form of counter violence cannot end the cycle of violence and cannot help in securing any rights. Hence, he rejected violent means even if it is supported by intelligent motives. Brute force remains brute force under any circumstances.

Religion meets nation

For Savarkar, nationalism of his Hindus was not a modern phenomenon, but primordial. He characterized India as historically a

nation since Vedic times. Foreign invasion was an important push for national unity in the later period. While commenting on foreign invasions in India, he writes, "Nothing makes self-conscious of itself so much as a conflict with non-self... Hatred separates as well as unites".[56]Collective memory of foreign invasions was the major means to consolidate people in India. But all people lived in the territory of India did not fit into the framework of nation suggested by Savarkar.

"We, Hindus, are all one and a nation, because chiefly of our common blood – 'Bharati Santai'"[57]writes Savarkar. This is the point where Savarkar's idea of Hindutva and its essential principles meet with his idea of the future nation. His idea of nation is not exclusively cultural in its nature. It has political and territorial connotations in it: "Hindustan meaning the land of Hindus, the first essential of Hindutva must necessarily be this geographical one".[58]Here geographical features of the land vivified into a living being. But for him the term Hindu means much more than having geographical significance, though it was the first requisite of Hindutva. Another significant implication of the term Hindutva was the "bond of common blood". Savarkar writes, "They are not only a Nation but also a race (*jati*)".[59] This *jati* is determined by a "common origin". He defines this bond of common blood as a "born brotherhood". This criterion was a question of heart and emotion; hence it is felt. The common culture or common *sanskriti* (civilization) is the third requisite of Hindutva. He claims that Hindus have history, and perhaps were the only people who succeeded in preserving it. Common law and rites were another unifying force of Savarkar's nation. He repeatedly stressed on these building blocks of Hindu nation in his various addresses in Hindu Mahasabha.

As we discussed earlier, for Savarkar, history of India was nothing but the narration of rise and fall of Hindus. It is evident from his popular and comprehensive commentary on Indian history – *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History* (1971) – which he called history from a nationalist point of view. For him, writing history of the nation was also a national duty. He says that depicting India as a land of perpetual defeat at foreign hands is absurd. Hence his historical narrations emphasized the episodes of protest by Hindu rulers against the foreign invasions. For Savarkar, real history of modern India begins with the glorious past of Chandragupta Maurya's rule. Interestingly, Savarkar's account of Indian history is a panorama of reaction to foreign aggressions. Those who fought back the aggression with the sword and pride were counted as national heroes. Those who could not fight back the foreign aggressions, especially non-Hindu rulers, were called traitors. The first glorious epoch of Indian history – that of

Chandragupta Maurya – was termed by Savarkar as "the glorious epoch of Hindu victories over the aggressor".[60] However, Ashoka's regime did not qualify to be included in this list of glorious epochs of Indian history. Savarkar finds that Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism and subsequent preaching of *ahimsa* harmed Indian politics and his own empire. His loyalty to Buddhist principle was a calamity in which Hindu nation was destroyed into pieces. In short, Emperor Ashoka's preaching of Buddhism demilitarized the nation. Savarkar called this Buddhist politics as "anti-national". He even termed the loss of martial might due to the preaching of absolute principles of Buddhism as "internal virus". He argued that the coming back of Vedic religion to the forefront by Pushyamitra and his Vedic sacrifices thrilled the nation again.

Savarkar argued that religious minorities – non-Hindus –cheated the nation during the foreign aggressions. For instance, Buddhists showed loyalty to Greek Emperor Menander when he invaded India. Another instance of disloyalty of Buddhists is identified during the reign of Kanishka. Savarkar (1971) asks:

> But what were the Indian Buddhists doing at that time? They tendered their submission to the Mlenchcha enemy, the Kushan emperor, as soon as he courted the Buddhistic cult and began to perpetrate acts of treachery against the Indian nation and the brave patriotic Vedic people, who were fighting for her liberty![61]

Savarkar also condemned the loyalty of Buddhists towards Arabian invaders in medieval India. Savarkar found that these kinds of disloyalty and treachery towards the nation was the chief reason for the decline of Buddhism in India and the displeasure of Vedic Hindus towards Buddhists. He called them as "anti-national and unpatriotic". Savarkar also criticized rulers like Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan for their religious persecutions and mass conversion of Hindu subjects into the Islam. For him, Tipu's building of temples was also a diplomatic tool, not a policy of religious tolerance by a Muslim ruler. On the other hand, Savarkar glorified Marathas who were successful in defending the nation through counter aggression against alien rulers. He writes that only Marathas could effectively arrest these kinds of fanatical activities in the nation. Similarly, invaders like Muhammad Ghori attacked temples at Kashi. In Savarkar's commentary, Delhi Sultanate and Mughals had same policies of religious intolerance towards Hindus in India. Rana Pratap Singh and other Rajputs could bravely fight against Muslim emperors. Hence, Savarkar suggested his fellow nationalists to learn from the great valour of Rana. According

to Savarkar, policies of Aurangzeb also had communal colour. Savarkar called him as "veritable demon in human form, vowed to root out the whole Hindu world".[62]In his historical accounts, even Akbar was not an anomaly to the Islamic policy of intolerance. Hence, he also rejected histories which glorify Akbar's regime as inclusive and secular.

Savarkar brought the God-Evil binary to argue that Hindus cannot respect Rana and Akbar at the same time. Human being cannot worship God and Evil alike. Savarkar reinterpreted the whole history of his nation, especially that of medieval India to popularize his notion of Hindu nation in India. Savarkar's book *Hindu Pad Padashahi* (1925) deals with Marathas' effort to liberate Hindu religion and Hindu nation from the yoke Muslim domination. No other Hindu states could annihilate Muslim domination as Marathas did. He called their valour attempt to liberate the Hindu nation as "Hindu war of independence". Shivaji, Baji Rao, and Madhoa Rao among others led these glorious wars. Savarkar accused Mughals of not fighting against British when they attacked India. Savarkar who was born to a Chitpavan Brahmin family of Maharashtra had pride about his ancestry of fighting against Islamic aggressions.[63] For him, even the Indian National Congress was a loyalist party. Congress betrayed its own sole mission and end up being pseudo nationalists.[64] Only a pro Hindu party could fight against the British colonialists. In the 1937 address at a Hindu Mahasabha meeting he accused that the Muslims were never found in the nationalist struggle, but were always in the forefront to reap the fruits of the struggle. He called Muslims in India as "suspicious friends", if not enemies. But in his initial writings he was not unfavourable to friendship with Muslims in a political struggle against the colonial rulers. Ironically, in the popular text *The Indian War of Independence of 1857* (1909) Savarkar considered Hindus and Muslims as "children of the soil of Hindusthan". India was the common mother of two communities and it was a bond of blood between brothers. However, he called the political association between them as an act of generosity on the part of Hindus.

In Savarkar's opinion, conversion of Hindus to other religions was indeed their conversion of nationality.[65]Being a non-Hindu was equated with the loss of national identity. Conversion to non-Hindu religion had serious implication on the sense of nationalism of future generations as well. Hence equating religious conversion as conversion of nationality is not just part of his narration of medieval history; rather it had implications on his post-independent discourses in Indian politics.

Savarkar counted Nepal as part of Hindu nation, though geographically it was a different state. But the case of Muslims was

entirely different. He writes, "Their faces are ever turned towards Mecca and Madina. But to the Hindus Hindusthan being their Fatherland as well as their Holy land, the love they bear to Hindusthan is undivided and absolute".[66] In Savarkar's criteria, only Hindus can claim the absoluteness in patriotism towards India. In a cablegram sent to the editor of *New York Times* on 7th April 1942 he opined that he would never allow a state within a state though he accepts the legitimate rights of minority communities. He even complained that Muslims were exploiting the spirit of INC and tolerance of the Hindu nation. For him, minorities were tolerated only when they recognize the Hindu nation. Savarkar always asserted that Hindus are a nation by themselves. Hence the religion of Hinduism is equated with the nation. Independence of India is not possible without the political independence of Hindus. "In this sense the consolidation and the independence of Hindu Nation is but another name for the independence of the Indian Nation as a whole"[67]. Hence, Hindu and India became synonyms. In order to establish this argument, he differentiated between community and nation in his 1938 presidential address to Hindu Mahasabha in Nagpur. He says:

> It is absurd to call us a community in India. The Germans are the Nation in Germany and the Jews a Community. The Turks are the Nation in Turkey and Arab or the Armenian minority a community. Even so the Hindus are the Nation in India-in Hindusthan, and the Moslem minority a community.[68]

He defended his religious nationalism against criticisms that designate it as communal and parochial. He argued that every type of patriotism is more or less communal and parochial. He says that, "No movement is condemnable simply because it is sectional". Nationalism and communalism are not conflicting ideas in Savarkar's thesis. He says in his 1938 address to Hindu Mahasabha that "When Communalism is only defensive, it is as justifiable and humane as an equitable Nationalism itself". It is condemnable only when it trespasses into the boundaries of other sister communities. Some scholars refuse to call Savarkar's nationalism as exclusively cultural or religious. For instance, Mishra[69] argues that Savarkar's nationalism had elements of territorial and secular nationalism of INC and cultural nationalism of Muslim League. Mishra characterizes it as 'territorial-cultural nationalism'. On the other hand, in *Hindu Pad Padashahi* (1925) Savarkar cherished the principles of universal brotherhood and world commonwealth. But these principles are honoured not at the cost of his nationalism. The question of larger unity of humankind is

appreciated only when the survival of national and social unit was ensured. He argued that an honorable unity between slave and master was impossible. Hence Savarkar was concerned about the immediate question of national survival, not the distant dream of universal humanism, though he appreciated both. Having discussed Savarkar's ideas of violence, religion and politics and its relation with his idea of nation and nationalism, let us examine how these ideas pose a challenge to the political thought of Gandhi, especially his idea of nation.

Gandhi's political discourse had no limitations to declare his nation as the homeland of all, no matter whether it is identical with cultural boundaries or not. He categorically declared, "India without doubt is the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country."[70]In a speech at an AICC meeting in Bombay he says, "If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She will cease to evoke any pride in me."[71]He declared that his patriotism is subservient to his religion of nonviolence. Hence Gandhi could not even imagine a nation which is compelled to survive upon violent means. He also thought that without nonviolence it is hard to be non-communal. He asks in a letter to Amrit Kaur, "Do you not agree that without non-violence we cannot be wholly non-communal?"[72]Hence his vision of future nation and communal harmony in it is not independent of the practice of nonviolence.

Like Savarkar, Gandhi also incorporated elements of internationalism in his vision of future nation. Both Gandhi and Savarkar set nationalism as a precondition for internationalism and the spirit of universal humanism. Savarkar preferred nation building as the immediate goal over internationalism whereas welfare of the world was immanent in Gandhi's patriotism. That's why Gandhi opined that it was impossible to be an internationalist without being a nationalist.[73]His nationalism is not inconsistent with internationalism. Not just nation, but a healthy and desirable national spirit is the precondition of internationalism of Gandhi. He writes, "It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of and rise on the ruin of the other."[74]Finally, let us see how Gandhi sees the relationship between religion and his future nation. Gandhi writes:

> A friend asked me the other day whether I shared the opinion often expressed that as between nationalism and religion, the former was superior to the latter. I said that the two were dissimilars and that there could be no comparison between dissimilars. Each was equal to the other in its own place. No man who values his religion as also his

> nationalism can barter away from the one for the other. Both are equally dear to him. He renders unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's. And if Caesar, forgetting his limits, oversteps them, a man of God does not transfer his loyalty to another Caesar, but knows how to deal with the usurpation.[75]

Hence the religious boundaries are not identical with the boundaries of Gandhi's future nation. For him, conversion from Hindu religion was not an anti-national trait. In a speech at a public meeting at Tinnevelly Gandhi states, "Acceptance of Christianity or any other faith should never mean denationalization."[76] Gandhi's boundaries of future nation is not as rigid as that of Savarkar.

Concluding Remarks

History as it is commonly understood is the record of violence. Nonviolence in that sense is an aberration. Only the most exceptional among exceptional human beings could breach this rule of history and make millions of people believe in the new rule of nonviolence. It is paradoxical how Gandhi being a nationalist in a repressive colonial state could make nonviolence his strategy. Gandhi being a practical idealist intertwined his principle of *ahimsa* with his vision of future nation to the extent possible.

Savarkar like other cultural nationalists, rightly understood that the rule of history is violence and believed that it is inevitable in the survival of a nation. Gandhi also understood the positive existence of violence and it's inevitability. But violence did not constitute the necessary pillar of Gandhi's future nation. Rather, he believed in the convertibility of violence into relative nonviolence. On the contrary, Savarkar justifies violence as inevitable exception in the glorified nationalist history by changing the moral colour of violent means. His ideas of tolerance, sacrifice and vengeance also carry tinges of violence in them. Gandhi by inverting the strength-fear schema placed nonviolence of the brave superior to violence and to nonviolence of the coward.

Savarkar vehemently criticized the excessive propaganda for absolute nonviolence by Gandhi. It is true that the principle of nonviolence in which Gandhi believed was absolute in nature and he never wanted to grant exceptions to this supreme law of being. But Gandhi being a self-declared practical idealist made his political instrument of nonviolence relative in practice. He believed that complete escape from violence is a utopia. Misreading of Gandhi's nonviolence as an absolute stemmed out of failure to comprehend the unique praxis of Gandhi's political instruments. Moreover, Gandhi's

idea of nonviolence and nation was more intertwined with the realities of violence than Savarkar's idea of a less violent nation.

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Culture of Dialogue in Democracy: Revisiting Gandhi

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ABSTRACT

A democratic system requires a set of structures and procedures, but it also needs a democratic culture. The vibrancy in democracy cannot be ensured by merely establishing new structures, a shift from subject political culture to participant political culture is essential for deepening democracy. A democratic society, further, needs an approach of 'understanding, coping with and celebrating diversities' and evolving such an inclusive notion of 'we' where there is no 'other'. A democratic society, therefore, must be 'dialogic' and not merely 'debating' in nature. The present paper seeks to highlight the significance of 'culture of dialogue' in strengthening democracy and attempts to explore how Gandhi's vision and experiments can be helpful in evolving this 'culture of dialogue'.

Key words: Dialogue, Debate, Democracy, Truth, Non-violence, Satyagraha.

THE 21ST CENTURY is the century of democracy; democratic form of the government is now accepted as the best form of government across the globe. But still the concept of democracy is in the process of evolution. There are several ways of defining and understanding democracy – from shallow to deep. At the shallow level, democracy is seen as a set of structural arrangements where people have right to vote and choose their representatives in a free and fair election; at the deeper level, democracy needs a spirit of inclusion and co-existence. One of the most profound features of democracy is its ability to allow the different view-points to co-exist and to resolve the differences between them peacefully. But in the contemporary times, increasing number of conflicts often

resulting in violent situations raises a series of questions: Where have we gone wrong in understanding the idea of democracy? What is the true meaning of democracy? Is it only a matter of adopting a particular form of government? Does democracy mean only procedural and structural democracy or something more than that? On the basis of International IDEA's (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) experience in Nigeria, Guatemala, Romania, Indonesia and Burkina Faso where it extended support for democratic development, Carlos Santiso (Senior Programm Officer, International IDEA) said: 'It was originally assumed that holding of relatively free and fair elections would naturally led to the gradual emergence of democratic institutions and the progressive consolidation of a democratic culture'[1]. However, the experiences of new emerging democratic states revealed that 'democratization process adopt, more often than not, irregular, unpredictable and sometimes reversible routes in highly fluid and volatile political environments'.[2] 'Elections do not equal democracy' because the process of democratization involves establishment of democracy 'in substance as well as in form'. [3] Thus, along with the structures and procedures of democracy, what Roel Von Meijenfeldt (Executive Director, Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy) calls the 'engineering part of democracy', sustainability of democracy also depends on strengthening of 'soft side of democracy'.[4] To strengthen the 'soft side of democracy', a society should have the capacities to:

- 'Resolve conflicts peacefully';
- 'Cooperate across political party lines';
- 'Develop an inclusive agenda for action'; and
- 'The capacity for citizen participation'[5].

Thus, a society can be called democratic in true sense only if it has the ability to accommodate the different perspectives, faiths and ideologies. Uniqueness of democracy lies in its capacity of consensus building, undoubtedly, this consensus should not and could not be reached upon through imposition of one view over the other. However, difference of opinion, sometime, may be so vast that it is difficult to have a consensus. But it is not a grave problem as long as the groups or individuals know the democratic method of disagreement and agree on the point that gradual effort needs to be made for reaching an agreement. The effective method for this can be dialogue because the right/correct or true solution can be reached only through it. Therefore, the democratic space must be dialogical than merely debating. Where right to speak and express must be enjoyed by all but it must be accompanied by the duty to listen and to listen carefully. Careful listening aims at

understanding the point of view of the others, it results in empathetic response not impulsive reaction. Art of active and empathetic listening is as important as the art of speaking for a vibrant democracy.

Often the terms debate and dialogue are used interchangeably, but these two differ in method, intention and spirit. In dialogue purpose is not 'to win. Everybody wins if anybody wins. There is a different sort of spirit to it'.[6] Dialogue, unlike debate, is a 'cooperative search for truth'[7] or right course of action. It is a process of genuine interaction in which dialogue partners listen deeply and respectfully to each other in such a way that they are ready to modify their position if the need for such revision is felt. Each participant in a dialogue strives to incorporate the concerns of the other participants into their own perspective, even when they continue to disagree. No participant gives up his/her identity, but each recognizes the human value of the claims of the others.[8] Purpose of dialogue 'is not to advocate but to inquire; not to argue but to explore; not to convince but to discover'.[9] Contrary to this, in debate though participants may sit together and speak and listen to each-other, but the purpose behind listening is not to understand others' viewpoints but to refute them. In the latter, the quest is not to find out the right/correct course of action but to prove one's own position as correct or right. 'Debate assumes only one right answer and invests in pressing and defending it; dialogue assumes the possibility of an answer better than any of the original points. Debate narrows views and closes minds; dialogue can build new relationship'.[10] Dialogue is inclusive in nature; it does not suppress diversity of perspectives and approaches, but rather encourages it. 'In the practice of dialogue, there is an agreement that one person's concepts or beliefs should not take precedence over those of others.'[11]

Thus, when democratic space is conceived merely as debating space, it leads to unending conflicts needing new structures to resolve them, which unfortunately fail to yield expected result in absence of a conducive environment. Any democratic structure may flourish only in a dialogical space. In last few decades, with the increasing incidences of intra and inter-state conflicts and their damaging effect on human capital, the significance of democratic dialogue is recognized worldwide. Many initiatives have been taken so that conflicting situation can be resolved through democratic dialogue. One of such initiatives was publication of *Democratic Dialogue- A Handbook for Practitioners* in 2007 with the joint efforts of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It provided a methodological tool to facilitate the work of institutions and

practitioners in designing, facilitating and evaluating dialogue process in diverse contexts. It aimed at extending help to different stakeholders in society to understand the process of democratic dialogue. While defining democratic dialogue, it prescribed following conditions as essential for democratic dialogue:

- Participants should demonstrate respect for each-other.
- There should be empathy and openness to different points of view.
- Interaction should be transparent and actors with authenticity should avoid secrets and hidden agendas.
- Actors put the learning principle into action through inquiry and questions that not only promote their own objectives but also seek to better understand what others are thinking.
- Processes should be inclusive and flexible.[12]

Further, referring to the qualities of dialogue participants, it suggested that they should:

- "Show empathy- that is, truly understanding the position of the other person instead of reacting to it;
- exhibit openness to expressing one's point of view with respect for the rules of dialogue;
- maintain a respectful tone even in the most extreme conditions;
- have conversation about what truly matters- the real thing;
- assume responsibility, individually and collectively for both the problem and solution;
- unblock emotionally; 'listening to the reasons of the heart that Reason often ignores';
- have the courage to recognize differences and even more, to recognize common ground; and
- demonstrate the capacity to change". [13]

The above essential conditions for democratic dialogue and qualities expected in dialogue participants reminds of Gandhian method of Satyagraha and Gandhi's Satyagrahi. In Gandhi's Satyagraha there is no place for ill will, hatred, hidden motives and rigidity, what matters is unqualified commitment for truth and a transparent heart with unconditional love for those who are on the other side. A meticulous reading of Gandhi- philosophy and experiments- uncovers that in Gandhi we may find a blue print of a democratic society based on cultural of dialogue. Gandhi considers dialogical approach towards different perspectives and viewpoints as the key feature of 'healthy public sphere' and Swaraj:

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly

> of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and therefore fitness for Swaraj. [14]

Gandhi's Dialogical Space

Gandhi's method of dealing with differences goes far beyond the liberal discourse of toleration.[15] Gandhi's method is not of 'negative tolerance of distance and co-existence, but rather one of communication and enrichment'.[16] Gandhi's approach is neither of suppressing differences nor of tolerating differences, but rather of understanding it without any egoism.[17] The relation between cultures and religions, according to Gandhi, should not be of hierarchy and competition but that of mutual learning, where they enrich 'each-other without loosing their identity'.[18] Gandhi's method is unique due to its moral underpinnings, he insists on love, empathy and total elimination of ego as essential prerequisites for creating an inclusive public sphere 'where meanings and symbols are jointly re-elaborated'. Gandhi's dialogical method goes far beyond Habermasian 'discourse ethics' in stressing the need for mutual love, reverence and care.[19] In Gandhian dialogical space one finds a unique 'ethics of listening'[20] , here, listening to others with an open mind and transparent heart is more valued activity then rational argumentation. Love, trust, empathy and a transparent heart engaged in the search for truth are the distinct characteristics of Gandhi's dialogical space. Gandhi's dialogical space is inclusive - any viewpoint, faith, group or individual is not excluded or disallowed.

Gandhi's conversations and dialogues with his contemporaries-adversaries like V.D.Savarkar; critical admirers like Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru and critics like Subhash Chandra Bose and B.R.Ambedkar - proves that for him, no one was beyond the ambit of dialogue. It is to be noted that Gandhi never gave uncritical acceptance to the views and ideas of even his beloved ones. Conversations between Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore can be cited as one of the finest examples of such respectful disagreements. Both were critical admirers of each other, the way they responded to each other's different view-points on various issues like Non-Cooperation Movement, machine and charkha, speaks of the unique art of listening. To quote Gandhi:

> The Bard of Shantiniketan is Gurudev for me as he is for the inmates of that great institution. But Gurudev and I early discovered certain

> differences…He had perfect right to utter his protest when he believed I was in error. My profound regard for him would make me listen to him more readily than to any other critic.[21]

It is this art of listening that allowed them 'to disagree with each-other with frankness'.[22] Moreover, the careful listening also resulted in some transformation in their initial position.

Further, Gandhi never rejected any viewpoint or idea only because it is not in tune with his own ideas. In an interview to Goparaju Ramchandra Rao (Gora)- which can be called a conversation between a theist and atheist – Gandhi, despite his unshakable faith in God, did not hesitate a bit in appreciating Gora.[23] Following excerpt from Gandhi's conversation with Gora can be seen as a model of language and spirit of dialogue:

> I see an ideal in your talk. I can neither say that my theism is right nor your atheism is wrong. We are seekers after truth. We change whenever we find ourselves in the wrong. I changed like that many times in my life. I see you are a worker. You are not a fanatic…There is no harm as long as you are not fanatical. Whether you are in the right or I am in the right, results will prove. Then I may go your way or you may come my way, or both of us may go a third way. So go ahead with your work. I will help you, though your method is against mine.[24]

In the above lines, there is neither total rejection, nor contempt, nor surrender, there is only critical engagement with the perspective of the other as well as with one's own perspective.

One of the major critics of Gandhi was B.R.Ambedkar, differences between the two especially on the issue of untouchability are often highlighted. Both of them wanted eradication of untouchability but were poles apart in their methods and approaches. For Gandhi, untouchability was primarily a social issue to be solved through social reforms, while Ambedkar considered political rights for untouchables as the only remedy.[25] Gandhi emphasized on the need for 'change of heart on the part of caste Hindus' but Ambedkar 'believed in legal redress of grievances and guarantee of rights, backed up by political power on the part of the aggrieved'.[26] Differences between the two reached at its peak on the issue of separate electorate when Gandhi's fast against separate electorate compelled Ambedkar to sign Poona Pact. Ambedkar saw it as a historical defeat for the untouchables. 'The communal Award', according to Ambedkar, 'was intended to free the untouchables from the thralldom of the Hindus. The Poona Pact is designed to place them under the domination of the Hindus.'[27] However, despite chasm between

two, Gandhi had an appreciation for Ambedkar's concern for untouchables. It was Gandhi who insisted that Ambedkar should be made a member of the Constituent Assembly. Gradually Gandhi's approach towards untouchability had also undergone some changes, in contrast to his initial position on inter-caste marriage [28], he started supporting inter-caste marriage as one of the significant measures for removal of untouchability in 1940s. He also accepted that there is a need for legal measures to curb the evil of untouchability. Emphasizing the need for a proactive role of legislator to remove untouchability, Gandhi categorically said that 'even if the whole body of Hindus opinion were to be against the removal of untouchability, he would still advise a secular legislature like the assembly not to tolerate that attitude.'[29]

The above episodes of Gandhi's dialogues with his contemporaries speak of his unique way of dealing with different viewpoints and prove that there is no difference-anxiety in Gandhi's dialogical space. He openly opposed them when he was not convinced with their position; appreciated them when found them on the right side and constantly kept scrutinizing his own positions and honestly accepted whenever realized the need for change in his position. Gandhi attempted to 'turn his enemies in his friends, not to win but to win over' and contributed 'to the dialogical construction of the Indian public sphere'.[30]

Gandhi's philosophy presents a complete model of a dialogical society - the principles of truth and non-violence as its philosophical foundation; Satyagraha as the technique of dialogic resistance; education as the tool for creating dialogical mind and heart and peace brigade as the institutional mechanism to prevent and resolve conflicts through dialogue.

Concepts of Truth and Non-Violence: Philosophical Foundation for Dialogue

Gandhi's whole life and philosophy was a search for truth and ultimately, he reached the conclusion that 'Truth is God':

> I used to say 'God is truth': But some men deny God. Some are forced by their passion for truth to say that there is no God, and in their own way they are right. So now I say, 'Truth is God'. No one can say 'Truth does not exist' without removing all truth from his statement. Therefore, I prefer to say 'Truth is God'. It has taken me fifty years of persevering meditation to prefer this way of putting it to the other.[31]

Gandhi's unmoving faith in truth taught him that rigidity of one's approach and position can never take him/her to truth, a true seeker of truth should always be ready to modify his/her position if in the

quest for truth he/she realizes the need for such modification:

> I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my pursuit after Truth, I have discarded 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 with 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.[32]

Gandhi has full faith in the existence of a universal Truth which is never changing but this cannot be discerned by human beings due to limitation of their comprehension. Therefore, he believes that 'we must be content with believing the truth as it appears to us' and keep on moving in the search without clinging to our own view of truths as absolute because it will distance us from Truth. Truth can be reached upon only through dialogue and not through rigid claims of certainty. For Gandhi, 'Human 'truths' were contingent and contextual, being reached through experience, praxis, debate and dialogue. His 'truth' was thus evolving and changing constantly; being in fact a series of 'truth' – with the 't' in lower case – rather than 'the Truth'…He abhorred certainties, preferring debates and honest disagreements to unthinking assent'.[33]

In Gandhi's scheme, rigid claims about one's own viewpoint as the Truthful viewpoint is not a wining position but a defeat; compromise and inconsistency are not weakness but strength. The seeker of truth and justice should never move with the motto of proving his idea of truth as the Truth, but rather with the unmoving will to search what is Truth. He prefers inconsistency over rigid claim of certainty: 'I must admit my many inconsistencies. But since I am called "Mahatma", I might well endorse Emerson's saying that "foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." There is, I fancy, a method in my inconsistencies'.[34]

Further, Gandhi's philosophy of Truth believes that there is a universal Truth, but human beings are able to comprehend its different dimensions in bits and pieces resulting in different viewpoints. For him, presence of different viewpoints is essential for discovering the Truth. Engagement with different viewpoints with an open heart and mind enables the seeker of the Truth to look critically at his as well as other's perspectives. Here, it is to be underlined that critical gaze of the seeker of Truth is both inward and outward. He engages in 'dialogue with one's own self and others'[35] and attempts to see his own position, perspective and viewpoint from distance without any egoistic attachment. Gandhi was firm in his belief that in dialogue, mutual criticism should be accompanied by the process of self-criticism.[36] Thus, in dialogue one is absolutely free from dogmatism, the biggest enemy

of Truth.[37] Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* – 'a dialogue between the editor and reader'[38] - written in a dialogical style exemplifies the patience of a seeker of Truth who is never in hurry to justify his viewpoints, but rather he gives sufficient space to the opponent. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, in fact, can be seen as a model text on dialogue.

In Gandhi, there is no difference anxiety because all diversities represent different aspects of Truth. Once the diversity is seen in the light of Jain principle of *'Anekantvada'* (many sidedness of Truth), the relation between the different cultures or religions cannot be of antagonism, competition or hatred but of 'communication and enrichment'.[39] Gandhi accepts that consensus is neither possible nor desirable always. Recollecting his discussions with Mr. Spencer Walton, the Head of the South African General Mission at Durban, Gandhi wrote that 'we knew the fundamental differences between us. Any amount of discussion could not efface them. *Yet even differences prove helpful, where there are tolerance, charity and truth*.'[40] Gandhi considers careful listening as the most valued method of understanding the viewpoints of others. Gandhi practiced this art of listening throughout his life. Referring to his interactions with his friends of Christian faith during his South African Days, Gandhi wrote that he was 'humble and respectful listener with an open mind.'[41] For him, search for Truth is always a dispassionate search and therefore, there is no place for rigidity on this path:

> I claim nothing than does a scientist who, though concludes his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought, and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusion, but keeps an open mind regarding them. I have gone through deep self-introspection, searched myself through and through, and examined and analysed every psychological situation. Yet I am far from claiming any finality or infallibility about my conclusions.[42]

The dialogic nature of Gandhian concept of truth makes non-violence essential, and this two together gives a grammar to knit the language of democracy. Violence – mental, physical or verbal – and truth cannot go together. Violent means can never help one in getting 'a more comprehensive grasp of absolute truth'.[43] Gandhi is firm in his belief that 'only ahimsa, non-violence, could make the quest for such [comprehensive] truth viable'.[44] Quest for truth demands acceptance of others perspectives and viewpoints with openness. This requires infinite love, for Gandhi, non-violence in its positive sense is the largest love. 'If I am a follower of *ahimsa,* I must love my enemy or a stranger to me as I would my wrong – doing father or son. This active ahimsa necessarily included truth and fearlessness'. [45] Gandhi

rejects the Machiavellian view that end justifies the means. For him, 'the goal did not exist at the end of a series of action designed to achieve it, it shadowed them from the very beginning'.[46]

Satyagraha as the Technique for Dialogue

Non-violent quest for truth with unmoving faith in the latter is Satyagraha. Gandhi's Satyagraha is built on the foundations of truth, non-violence and love. Contemporary theories on democratic dialogue and deliberation consider rational argumentation, absence of ill will and distrust as the most essential prerequisites for democratic dialogue, but Satyagraha goes one step further and stresses the need for love. Satyagraha is a shared search for right course of action demanding unending patience which comes from love force. Gandhi's Satyagraha is not merely a political tool to resolve conflicts but has a deep ethical dimension. It is 'a combination of reason, morality and politics'.[47] In Satyagraha, appeal is made to 'the opponent's head, heart and interests'.[48] It goes far beyond argumentation and presents a synthesis of 'cognition, empathy and agape.'[49] Thus, the key characteristics of Satyagraha are 'tolerance, civility, non-violence and the loving care of others including one's opponents'.[50] Satyagrahi does not want to harm the opponent, but rather believes in self-suffering. In Satyagraha, 'the dichotomy between the oppressor and the oppressed is transcended.'[51] Gandhi categorically writes:

> It is a breach of Satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him… Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice because those who believe in the justice of their cause need to possess boundless patience.[52]

This emphasis on patience and love liberates the Satyagrahi from any fear of failure or defeat. The process of reaching the agreement will be gradual because the change has to come from inside and not merely external. Furter, in Satyagraha aim is not merely mutual agreement but 'realization of a deeper truth together'.[53] Stressing the need for patience and indomitable faith in basic goodness of human heart in search of truth, Gandhi said:

> I myself have always believed in the honesty of my enemies, and if one believes in it hard enough, one finds it. My enemies took advantage of my trust in them and deceived me. They deceived me eleven times running; and with stupid obstinacy, I went on believing in their honesty. With the result that, the twelfth time, they couldn't help keeping their word. Discovering their own honesty was a happy surprise for them

> and for me too. That is why my enemies and I have always parted very pleased with each other.[54]

In fact, in Satyagraha there is no 'Other' who is to be seen as morally wrong, Satyagraha cannot be initiated with this narrow feeling. In Satyagraha, listening to the other must not be seen as some kind of concession made out of mercy, but rather as an opportunity to check one's own claim and to modify it, if required. Generally, dialogue initiatives fail because the participants feel that modification in their own position will be perceived as defeat, but in Satyagraha such modification, if required in the quest for truth, is one step towards victory. The nature of Satyagraha is opposite to debate where participants want to prove their point of view as the right point view. Here, the situation is entirely different because what is at stake is 'not their reputation as persons of integrity or possessors of truth' but truth itself. [55]Therefore, the Satyagrahi should be critical of his own as well as the others' version of truth. Thus, Satyagraha 'institutionalizes mutual respect, prohibits the construction of 'otherness', and neutralizes conflict which arises out of non-recognition in divided societies.'[56]

Gandhi's Education as Tool for Creating a Dialogic Self

Gandhi knows that Satyagraha is not possible without utmost conviction in truth, non-violence, unending love and faith in basic goodness of human nature. Therefore, what is needed is a mind and heart receptive to these principles. Injecting a bundle of rational instructions into mind cannot yield the expected outcome of Satyagraha, since it needs a heart which can love, trust, respect and empathize, and a mind which can reflect and understand. Gandhi believes that the right kind of education can be the only tool to produce such minds and hearts. The purpose of education is not merely producing intelligent brains but empathetic, sensitive and reflective beings. Therefore, he emphasizes:

> True education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs … But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart.[57]

The Satyagrahi should have the ability to win the heart of opponent and this cannot be done with only reasoned arguments without soul force. For Gandhi, 'a man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious

combination of all three is required for the making of whole man'.[58]

If education has to be a means for evolving a dialogic self, it must move ahead of the project of producing merely rational beings who are trained to deal with all situations only with rational arguments. 'Gandhi understood that truth/*satya* was reached through a complex dialogue'[59] and 'in many cases reason but itself would not win an argument.[60] When rational argument fails in convincing the other, appeal should be made to heart.

In this context, it seems essential to underline that despite his faith in secular nature of state, Gandhi insisted on the need for religious education in India. Though he is aware of the difficulty of making provisions for religious instructions in a country like India which represents a large number of religions, but still emphasized that 'if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be as necessary as secular instruction'.[61]

Religion has a broader meaning for Gandhi, religions are not rigid dogmatic beliefs, but rather 'instruments to walk the path of truth'.[62] The true understanding of religion will enable the followers of different faiths to engage in dialogue. Gandhi could understand that in India where people belonging to different religions live together and for many of whom religion is decisive of their way of life and thinking, understanding about different religions is essential for dialogue among religions. However, he takes enough precautions while stressing the need for religious education and firmly says that 'I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education'[63]. State should stay out of religion and 'religious education should be the sole concern of religious association'.[64]

> A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose, the student should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of reverence and broad-minded tolerance… There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions, that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions.[65]

For religious harmony, dialogue among religions is required and for dialogue mutual respect is the prerequisite. Gandhi was firm in his belief that religious harmony cannot be ensured by merely creating a false image of secular society, where individuals are expected to keep their religious identity aside and interact with each other as abstract individuals. It is impossible to extract individual from constitutive attachments and construct them as abstract units of society.

On the contrary, in order to be genuine dialogue partners, it is essential for them to understand their religious selves. This would help them in understanding each-others religious perspective. For Gandhi, right kind of religious education may help the individual to remain rooted in his/her own religions without being blind to it and to understand the religious space of others. Only such a trained heart can understand and comprehend Gandhi's emphasis on equality of religions:

> If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we could no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God. Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect is always subject to a process of evolution and re-interpretation…All faith constitutes a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faiths also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome those defects.[66]

Gandhi's Peace Brigade as Dialogue Practitioners

Gandhi also thought of evolving an institutional mechanism for creation of a dialogical space. His idea of Peace Brigade, where he talks about resolving conflict situations through initiatives of people trained in non-violent resolution of conflict, can be highly effective in making of a dialogical public sphere. This peace brigade would have twin functions: first; to extend support to people under conflict situation including initial medical help; second; trust building between communities. 'Peace Brigade need not to wait till conflagration breaks out but will try to handle the situation in anticipation'.[67]The members of peace brigade should have equal respect for all faiths and, moreover, they must have knowledge of the basic principles of all religions. This would help them in understanding the nature of communal conflicts. Members of peace brigade should be local men so that they may be aware of complexities of the conflict situation but they must be impartial. Further, these messengers of peace must develop a good rapport with people through regular contact, so that people can rely on them on occurrence of conflict. Primary task of the peace brigade is to create an environment of dialogue to prevent conflict and thereafter to resolve conflict peacefully through dialogue. Through the mechanism of peace brigade Gandhi wanted creation of dialogical public space based on mutual trust.

> The idea is to have as many good and true men and women as possible. These can be had only if volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in various walks of life but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle…Non –violent corps must be small if they are to be efficient. Such brigade may be scattered all over, there may be one each for a village or a *Mohalla*.[68]

Gandhi's peace brigade appears very close to contemporary dialogue practitioners who are 'people actively or potentially engaged in doing dialogue work- organizing it, facilitating it and promoting it within their institutions and societies'.[69]

To sum up, Gandhi's philosophy and experiments present a systematic plan for establishing a sustainable democracy. Though he was also concerned with the procedural and structural aspect of democracy, what concerned him more was the 'soft side of democracy'. Inclusion is the core value of a true democratic society, a society where there is no 'Other'. In Gandhi, one finds the vision and method for establishing such an inclusive democratic society rooted in an inclusive notion of 'We' evolved through feelings of mutual trust, respect and love resulting in acceptance of different viewpoints and ways of living.

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Rural Industries and Social Change: Odisha's Influence on Gandhi

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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights Madhusudan Das's influence on Gandhi, who sought to bring about changes in rural economy and rehabilitate the untouchables. Gandhi's views on rural reconstruction, development and social transformation through the promotion of village and cottage industries, vocational education, removal of untouchability were closely related to his broader vision of socio-economic transformation, in general and development of rural areas, in particular. He had travelled across the length and breadth of the country to understand people's problems. His several visits to Odisha had helped him understand the reasons for which the province was languishing under abject poverty. During these visits he saw firsthand the experiments carried out by Madhusudan Das, known to be the architect of modern Odisha, in his Utkal Tannery, and was deeply influenced by the latter's vision of and approach to industrialization.

Key words: poverty, rural reconstruction, social change, sustainability

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI'S engagement with Odisha began in 1915, shortly after he returned from South Africa. On receiving the news of famine and widespread distress in the province, he deputed one of his associates, Amrit Lal V. Thakkar, popularly known as Thakkar Bappa, to undertake relief work there.[1] From that time onwards, being constantly moved by Odisha's acute poverty, Gandhi believed that the best way to move out of such terrible deprivation was development of agriculture, animal husbandry, khadi and cottage industries.

While Gandhi's tours to various parts of the country have been well documented, what may not be common knowledge is the fact

that Gandhi made eight trips to Odisha between 1921 and 1946 to gain first-hand knowledge of the province and other specific objectives like ameliorating the conditions of *dalits*. He visited Odisha for the second time in 1925 at the invitation of Madhusudan Das, the foremost leader of Odisha at that time. Madhusudan had invited him to his tannery, which was known as Utkal Tannery or Utkal Charmalaya. After Gandhi visited the place in Cuttack, he was convinced that this kind of leather industry would not only be an important instrument for poverty removal in the entire country, it would also achieve objectives like upholding the dignity of labour and rehabilitation of the depressed classes. On these issues, the views of Gandhi and Madhusudan remarkably converged. During his Harijan *Padayatra* in 1934, Gandhi interacted with thousands of people and closely observed their conditions of living. He stressed the need for the abolition of untouchability and popularization of charkha.[2] While the charkha was one of Gandhi's high priorities, in Odisha, Madhusudan's concern was promotion of local industries.

Development of local industries had always fascinated Madhusudan. During his visit to London, he had tried to study different manufacturing processes and was convinced that his country would never progress unless its industries were also well developed. In the 19th century, Cuttack had earned some fame for its filigree works, but this industry was languishing. In order to revive it, he spent a lot of money for teaching the artisans how to improve their skills. He set up a workshop within the compound of his house, where 150 artisans worked. He brought master trainers from all over the country to teach the craftsmen of Cuttack arts in which they were found deficient. His factory was called the "Orissa Art Wares". Here, he started many other activities such as *sola* work, horn and ivory work, cabinet-making and other kinds of woodwork.[3] To produce cotton clothes he grew cotton plants in his garden. A variety of hand-looms were brought from different places in India, and even from Japan, and hand-woven cloth was manufactured in his factory as early as in 1902. He encouraged *Swadeshi* goods but had to contend with tough competition from the machine-made ones imported from the West.[4] He found that a major reason for indigenous industries languishing was the preference given to European-made articles over goods produced by Indians. He was determined to change this situation by promoting local industries of Odisha.

Way back in 1904, Madhusudan started putting in a lot of effort for developing the leather industry in Odisha. He saw that raw hides were exported in large quantities from Odisha to Calcutta and from there to England and France and these were brought back to India in

the form of finished goods, thus inflicting a heavy loss on Odisha's economy, especially in terms of workers' wages. He started a tannery in order to remedy this situation. At first, work was carried out on an experimental basis in his house. Shortly thereafter, it was transferred to his garden house at a place called Chauliaganj near Cuttack, where all kinds of finished leather goods were turned out in large quantities from hides and skins collected mostly from the surrounding princely states.[5] In the tannery, besides 100 skilled cobblers and tanners, nearly 300 semi-skilled and unskilled *dalits* were engaged. This kind of enterprise was the first of its kind in the entire country.[6] Madhusudan was also clear about the need for reservation for the depressed classes in industrial undertakings. This shows that he was deeply committed to the cause of improving the condition of alienated untouchables and underprivileged minorities.

People unfamiliar with the history of Odisha may not know that, before Gandhi's return from South Africa, Madhusudan, who had pioneered the movement of unifying Odia-speaking tracts into a separate province had already thought about and implemented activities related to leather tanning and manufacturing of leather goods. Later, while carrying out similar experiments, Gandhi drew further inspiration from Madhusudan.

Gandhi's experiments with tanning and leather work come closest to spinning of yarn and weaving of clothes. Gandhi learnt the craft of shoe making in South Africa from his devoted German friend Hermann Kallenbach. Kallenbach became known to Gandhi through a common friend by the name Mr. Khan, a Mahomedan lawyer who had taken upon himself the legal responsibilities of Gandhi when the latter developed his "spirit of service" by voluntary hospital work to nurse indentured labourers coming from the different Indian regions and communities.[7]About his meeting with Kallenbach, Gandhi said, "We met quite by accident. He was a friend of Mr Khan's, and as the latter had discovered deep down in him a vein of other-worldliness he introduced him to me".[8] Gandhi reminisces about his time spent with Kallenbach and writes, "he is a man of strong feelings, wide sympathies and childlike simplicity. He is an architect by profession, but there is no work, however lowly, which he would consider to be beneath his dignity".[9]

From June 4, 1910, Kallenbach, Gandhi and his two sons settled in Tolstoy Farm, an eleven hundred acre farm owned by Kallenbach, 22 miles from Johannesburg. Gandhi learnt the art of shoe-making from Kallenbach while living in Tolstoy Farm. On his part, Kallenbach had learnt the art of shoe-making from the German Trappist monks on Mariannhill. After completing the course Kallenbach taught this art to

Gandhi and others at Tolstoy Farm.[10]

Long after Gandhi had returned from South Africa, one day, he and some of his co-workers witnessed the full process of flaying a dead bull near Sevagram in India where he had set up an Ashram. The flaying of the dead animal with a village knife without damaging the hide impressed Gandhi. He was told that none, not even surgeons, could do this more skillfully than a village tanner. A thought which puzzled Gandhi was that every medical student who did a dissecting job was respected whereas a sweeper's or a tanner's occupation was despised. This thought led Gandhi to learn the art of tanning and become an expert in this.[11]

While learning the art of tanning, he decided to use the hide of only those animals that die a natural death. Shoes made from such leather became known as 'ahimsak chappals'. In the course of his engagement with this activity, he learnt that raw hide worth ninety million rupees was being exported from India every year. After being treated scientifically, finished leather articles costing tens of millions of rupees were imported to India from abroad. This did not only mean a loss of money but loss of an opportunity of using native intelligence for tanning raw hides and making good leather articles. Thus, like spinners and weavers, hundreds of tanners and cobblers were being deprived of their livelihood.[12]

To help the tanners and cobblers, Gandhi sought help from tanning chemists for reviving the art of tanning which was fast dying out. Gandhi affirmed from his own experience that scavenging and tanning could be done in a healthy and clean manner. A tannery section was opened by Gandhi at the ashrams in Sabarmati and Wardha. He kept in touch with the research work that was being done in Tagore's Shantiniketan for improving the process in rural areas. Gandhi did not want to abandon the ancient method of tanning, nor did he like to move leather work and such other industries from villages to cities as that would have meant sure ruin for villagers. They would lose the little opportunity they had of making skilled use of their hands and heads. He wanted to find a decent and dignified way of handling dead animals, for example, moving a carcass from one part of the village to another.[13] At the same time, Gandhi felt the need of a band of dedicated workers who would see that the tanners get proper wages, real education and medical aid.[14]

Gandhi's concern about untouchability

One of the features of the Indian society that constantly bothered Gandhi was the caste system in India which looked down upon a sizeable number of people and treated them as untouchables. The

other areas of Gandhi's concern included the dignity of labour and self- reliance. From all these perspectives, it was natural that leather work and tannery would attract his attention. Shoes are an essential item of use by almost everyone regardless of caste and class. Yet, processes involved in shoe-making had always been treated as unclean and these were always considered to be the domain of the lower castes. Though these people carried out vital functions in the value chain, they were deprived of dignity.

Even now, the social formations engaged in work on animal residues are in general an oppressed lot across the country. Diverse social and economic factors have been impacting them adversely. Long after Gandhi's passing, during the 1970s, when a strong movement towards sanskritisation among those caste-groups engaged in leather work was going on, the caste panchayats took the view that, since the occupation of flaying dead animals was one that made their social status so low, they would refrain from doing so. Since their logic is unassailable and cannot be brushed aside, it is necessary that occupations such as leather works should not remain confined to so-called 'lower castes' and people of all castes should be engaged in them.[15]

Gandhi wondered why tanning should be a degrading calling. It could not have been so in ancient times. But today, a million tanners do this work and are looked down on as untouchables. The higher classes despise them and they lead a life deprived of art, education, cleanliness and dignity. Tanners, sweepers and shoe-makers serve the society and do useful work, yet observance of caste rules force a part of the nation to live a life utterly bereft of dignity and wellbeing. However, in other countries, a man does not become a poor illiterate untouchable if he chooses the profession of a tanner or a shoe-maker.

Hence, Gandhi wanted everyone to learn the art of shoe-making. He even tried to be adept at skinning dead animals, using all parts of the carcasses productively. He attached paramount importance to the tannery established by Madhusudan because, according to him, over and above being a great industrial enterprise, the tannery was a practical step towards solving the problems of untouchables and helping them regain their self-respect. Gandhi paid a glowing tribute to Madhusudan in a special article published on 15.11.1932 in Bombay Chronicle in the following manner:

> Madhusudan Das, a great philanthropist and had himself learnt the modern process of tanning, had prepared statistics to show what the country was losing annually owing to the superstition of untouchability masquerading under the name of religion....[16]

Here, it is important to point to the fact that the landless untouchable classes had always been a source of anxiety to Madhusudan from the early days of his industrial activities. The leather industry, he believed, could benefit all sections of people. Very few people knew how the hide export business affected the poor peasants of Odisha. Every peasant usually owns cattle to cultivate his field. But he fails to know what to do after the cattle dies. According to the custom of the country, the Hindu peasant is not allowed to sell the hides. The result is that they are taken by the *chowkidars* of the village or by members of some untouchable classes. The poor peasant loses his plough cattle, lands lie uncultivated and he has no means to replace the dead cattle. What Madhusudan suggested was that, if a committee of influential men of the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, be appointed to study the details of hides' trade, a platform could be created where all may join in the development of this industry as a means of improving the economic conditions of many classes.[17]

Significance of leather industry in the Indian context

India is endowed with twenty per cent of world cattle and buffalo and eleven per cent of world goat and sheep population. According to the estimates of the Council for Leather Exports, annual availability of leathers in India is approximately three billion sq.ft. The country accounts for 13 per cent of world leather production. India is the fourth largest exporter of leather goods in the world. The total leather and leather products export stood at 3.8 billion dollars in 2019-20. India is the second largest footwear producer after China and also the second largest consumer of footwear after China. The leather industry is an employment-intensive sector providing jobs to 4.2 million people, mostly from the weaker sections of society.[18] As early as 1945 Kumarappa, a Gandhian economist had shown that export of raw hides and skins from India are amongst the largest in the world. If these raw materials can be converted into leather, this would provide occupation to millions of people in rural areas.[19]

It has been well documented that Gandhi and Kumarappa, working together closely during the 1930s and 1940s, proposed a theory and practice of low-cost, labour-intensive, low-environmental impact, and decentralized industrialization, which they both argued was crucial to restoring employment, autonomy, and dignity to every Indian. In the words of Venu Madhav Govindu and Deepak Malghan, "while Gandhi laid out the broad contours of an argument for swadeshi, it was Kumarappa who out of prolonged engagement shaped it into a theory of decentralization". It has also been shown by them how Kumarappa favoured small and decentralized

production whenever possible, and how his position is in stark contrast to the one taken by Jawaharlal Nehru, who advocated large-scale production and centralization of resources. Gandhi's vision of a just and non-violent decentralized economic order centered on village republics was developed within a moral-material framework. He sought to guarantee dignity of the individual by securing dignity of labour.[20]

The village has always remained at the centre of Gandhian economics, and domestic animals are an integral part of self-sufficient villages. In death, too, they become veritable sources of useful materials and wealth. Men and women belonging to certain social formations engage in recovering the skins, bones and hooves of these animals. These materials find their use in downstream industry. As in all lines of business, there are interest groups in the value chain of animal skins and hides. Each rung in the value chain tends to exploit the lower rungs. The leather or leather product exporters remain at the top of the pyramid and the leather flayers find themselves at the bottom. While the occupation of leather flayers is essential to the functioning of the rural economy, those who practise the occupation are grossly exploited and neglected.[21]

Convergence between Madhusudan Das and Gandhi

Madhusudan had exerted a deep influence on Mahatma Gandhi, the effect of which remained undiminished throughout the latter's entire life. Gandhi had regarded Madhusudan as his mentor at the time of formulating his recuperative programmes for economic resurgence of the country, for spearheading his Swadeshi industrial movement embracing the entire country and for the rehabilitation of untouchables as a measure of social reformation and regeneration. Madhusudan had started implementing his innovative programmes since 1895 long before Gandhi took such initiatives. The former laid a lot of stress on introduction of rural industries and handicrafts in the village which would have an invigorating effect on rural society. It may be noted here that for Gandhi the most important lesson learnt from John Ruskin's *Unto his Last* was the precept that "the life of labour, that is, the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living". [22] Madhusudan had also highlighted the effectiveness of basic education combined with vocational training.

While paying a fulsome tribute to Madhusudan in an article on "Village Tanning and its Possibility" published in *Harijan* on 7.9.1935, Gandhi memorably observed:

> The divorce of intellect from body labour has made us perhaps shortest

> lived, most resourceless and most exploited nation on the earth. The state of village tannery is perhaps the best proof of my indictment. It was late Madhusudan Das, who opened my eyes to the great crime against a part of humanity. He sought to make reparation by opening what might be called an educational tannery.[23]

It is also true that prominent leaders and associates of Madhusudan were also deeply influenced by Gandhi. Foremost among them were Gopabandhu Das and Gopabandhu Choudhury. Gopabandhu Das is widely known for his contribution to the freedom struggle, education, journalism and humanitarian work. He had taken the lead to set up a unique school at Sakhigopal near Puri with the objective of inspiring young minds to dedicate themselves to the nation-building project. Realising that the prevailing pattern of education was responsible for creating a chasm between formal learning and people's lived reality, Gopabandhu Das was keen that children did physical labour, learnt various crafts and skills while acquiring bookish knowledge. He felt that "a human being can do wonders if he/she combines mental and physical faculties".[24] Taking note of Gandhi's insistence on children spinning yarn at national schools, Gopabandhu wrote:

> Activities such as growing cotton, making spinning wheels, carding cotton, weaving clothes and preparing dyes are integrally connected to occupations such as carpentry, farming, dyeing and weaving. The chief objective of national education is therefore to link book learning to vocational activities.[25]

Madhusudan had visited the school at Sakhigopal and blessed the initiative. It may be noted here that there was an inimitable complementarity between the leadership roles and works of Madhusudan and Gopabandhu Das. Long after the departure of Madhusudan and Gopabandhu Das, Manmohan Choudhury, son of landlord turned freedom fighter, Gopabandhu Choudhry, went to Calcutta in the mid 1930s to learn the craft of leather tanning and shoe-making in a tannery. He used his knowledge and skills acquired in Calcutta to set up a tannery at Bari in Odisha which was a hub of freedom struggle as well as other constructive activities being carried along Gandhian principles.[26] In a significant way, Manmohan was continuing the legacy left by Madhusudan and Gandhi.

Continued relevance of the Gandhian model of rural development

Some of Gandhi's core economic ideas are contained in the book Hind Swaraj written by him in 1909. And these ideas continued to evolve till his last days, but the central ideas remained largely unchanged.

One such idea was providing gainful employment to each and every individual in self-sufficient village republics.[27]

Just before independence Gandhi had questioned the economic model which the Orissa government wanted to follow. For instance, in 1946, when Odisha government was actually considering a proposal for establishing a textile mill, Gandhi wrote to Harekrushna Mahatab, the then Prime Minister of Odisha, to reconsider it. He wrote:

> I hardly appreciate your reasoning that Orissa, because it is poor, needs a mill that would mean that every poor region or villages, should have mills to remove its poverty.....Big mills are not going to revitalize the Orissa villages and the real India lives in its villages. Now that the government is in the hands of the people, it is the duty of the people's representatives to turn their full attention to villages and see that the wheel hums in every house and all the local industries are revived everywhere. This is my cherished dream and I assume yours too.[28]

What Gandhi was opposed to was blind imitation of the Western model of development. He wanted India to follow its own path of progress taking into account its unique characteristics. Elaborating on the ideas of Gandhi, Kumarappa held that, to develop our own country, the path chosen by developed nations need not be followed as this may not be appropriate to our conditions. The results are urbanization, mechanization, industrialization, consumerism and centralization. Thus, there is a dark side to this kind of western model of development. According to him, there are several problems such as increasing unemployment, poverty, black money and corrupt political system, which are growing in our country.

Taking a cue from Gandhi, Kumarappa was always concerned with autonomy of the individual. To him, a "well-conceived" economy is one that allows "free play to all creative faculties of every member of society". Kumarappa's insistence was on "permanence" (what might be called sustainability), and in his view, economic growth cannot be unlimited, and the principal task is to create institutions that organize the human economy in an equitable way that minimises ecological imbalance. The influence of his most well-known book, *Economy of Permanence*, is seen in E. Fritz Schumacher's *Small is beautiful*. Schumacher's book went on to become a manifesto of sorts for the local economy movements in the developed world.[29]

Current mainstream economic theory and practices lay disproportionate emphasis on growth, which is expected to result in prosperity for all in due course. But what is being experienced is that in both the capitalist system and the command and control system, there is excessive concentration of wealth, increasing inequality,

growing unemployment and severe contraction of human autonomy. What is worse is that these models of economic development have paid scant attention to environment issues and sustainability. Under these circumstances, especially when climate change crisis looms large posing a threat to all the achievements of mankind, the development models pursued over the last two centuries or so appear to be transient and unsustainable. Therefore, the need of the day is an alternate vision encapsulated in the lifework of Gandhi. Far-sighted leaders like Madhusudan and Gandhi had a vision which needs to be rediscovered so that every person's potential is fully realized, autonomy and agency are restored in society and the dream of a sustainable world is achieved.

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Notes & Comments

Pope Francis and Gandhi: Five Keys to Leading by Example

Ary Waldir Ramos Díaz[1]

AS THE PRODUCT OF several years of study, Peter Gonsalves, a priest and professor at the Salesian University, Faculty of Social Communication, published the book, *Gandhi and the Popes, from Pius XI to Francis* (Peter Lang, Ed. 2015) in which he presents 25 key leadership qualities that Pope Francis and Mahatma Gandhi have in common. Five of them are presented below.

Weeks after Pope Francis assumed leadership of the Catholic Church, Gonsalves was fascinated by his ability to lead by example. "It struck me as being very similar to that of Gandhi's style. This piqued my curiosity to delve into a deeper investigation to understand the history of Pope Francis and to look for clues that would confirm my hypothesis that Francis was influenced by Gandhian thought." he told *Aleteia*.

He found a plausible connection through his study of an Indian Jesuit, Jerome D'Souza, who admired Gandhi, who was a close friend of Gandhi's confidant C. Rajagopalachari, and who was appointed one of the architects of the Indian Constitution.

"He was well known to the Superior General of the Jesuits, J.B. Janssens, who wished to awaken the social conscience of his confreres

spread throughout the world with his *Instructio De Apostolatu Socialis* in 1949. He put D'Souza in charge of founding the Social Institute of India and in 1957 promoted D'Souza to the role of Assistant and Advisor to the Superior General of the Jesuits."

The *Instructio* document was compulsory reading for all members of the Society and Jesuit novices had to memorize it. Among the novices in 1958 was the young Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

Gonsalves admits that this was the furthest he could go with his investigation, partly due to the embargo in 2013 on documentation from the [Vatican and Jesuit] archives beyond 1939.

Nonviolence in Pope Francis' writings

As a result, his hypothesis – the connection between Bergoglio and Gandhian thought – could not be fully confirmed in 2015 when he published his book. However, in 2017, he had a surprise. The Pope himself sent the world a confirmation.

"The Message of Pope Francis for World Peace Day, 2017 came as a bolt from the blue. The title of the message was *Nonviolence: A style of Politics for Peace*. When I read it, I was delighted to see that the Pope knew and appreciated the core meaning of Gandhi's contribution to the world."

He thought that Francis' message was explicitly paying homage to Gandhi in the following lines of Paragraph 4: *Nonviolence is sometimes taken to mean surrender, lack of involvement and passivity, but this is not the case. […] The decisive and consistent practice of nonviolence has produced impressive results. The achievements of* ***Mahatma Gandhi*** *and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the liberation of India, and of Dr Martin Luther King Jr in combating racial discrimination will never be forgotten.* (01-01-2017)

Again, on October 3, 2020, another powerful evidence appeared in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. "On reading it, I took for granted that the foundations of the document were exclusively Christian, until I came to the end and read paragraph 286 in which Pope Francis openly states: *In these pages of reflection on universal fraternity, I felt inspired particularly by Saint Francis of Assisi, but also by others of our brothers and sisters who are not Catholics: Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many more*."

This is arguably the first time a pope has officially acknowledged the contribution of the Gandhian nonviolent method for political change and perhaps the first time a non-Christian gets a mention in a papal encyclical."

Leadership, common ground

Professor Gonsalves mentions 25 common elements of leadership

between Pope Francis and Gandhi (*Gandhi and the Popes*, 2015, p. 79). For our readers, however, he proposes five common clusters in the leadership of the Latin American Pope and India's Father of independence, which can help people of today emerge from the mechanisms of polarization, nationalism and intolerance.

"The two leaders lead by example; their revolutions are self-engendered; they believe that their personal integrity is fundamental and intrinsic to their social engagement.

Their preparation as leaders starts from an active involvement in existential dilemmas of the people from where they live and direct the revolutionary changes."

Francisco and Gandhi "condemn egoistic, inhumane and unjust traditions and intelligently and scientifically design strategies to combat them. They are passionate about truth, justice, equality, forgiveness and dialogue."

In leading by example, "they cultivate an inclusive and universal perspective; they believe that compassion is the key to the stoniest hearts."

"They believe that the means ought to be as morally appropriate as the ends and their thoughts and activities aim to fulfil the Divine Plan. They maintain a personal relationship with the Divine. Their strength is visible in weakness and humility; they walk alone but are never lonely; they are ready to die for their cause."

How to apply non-violence in daily life

The professor of social communication also mentions three aspects of Gandhi's method of non-violence so that ordinary persons may apply them in their personal relationships – especially those who suffer humiliation, loss of reputation, or those who are treated as enemies.

"When one is faced with aggression, arrogance and hatred, the best and healthiest solution is to practice non-violence. This is based on a deep awareness that Absolute Truth perfectly controls the situation.

Retreating in silence and exercising deep breathing can help. Invite the Spirit of love and forgiveness with each inhalation, and let go of revenge and hateful thoughts while exhaling. This is a great help, and one of the best ways to peace and love that will make us resilient in the face of hurts that others cause us."

It is personalized active nonviolence – affirms the author – and the highest expression of it. "For Gandhi the principle of *ahimsa* is not to hurt others even by evil thoughts, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing anybody ill. Not even by greed."

Likewise, Gandhi invites us to respond "by meeting the persons

who humiliate us with kindness and ignoring the hurt caused, gradually provoking in even the stoniest hearts the desire to change their ways. This may not happen overnight, but as a process through the power of introspection and attentiveness to one's conscience."

For Gandhi, God is Truth and Truth is God, confirms Gonsalves. "The introspection that a healing relationship demands is the act of experiencing the Truth in one's own being. It is not a way of thinking; it is an appeal to Love, 'a force superior to all the forces put together,' as Gandhi would say."

Nonviolence and social participation

Politics today divides many people. Can the method of nonviolence admired by the Popes, even those who preceded Francis, be a model for today's generation in terms of healthy political participation?

"Gandhi's understanding of nonviolence as *ahimsa* which includes service (love, compassion) and truth, is a perfect model of what politics is supposed to be.

Thomas Merton was quick to recognize in Gandhi "one of the very few men of our time who applied Gospel principles to the problems of a political and social existence in such a way that his approach to these problems was inseparably religious and political at the same time."

A Gandhian perspective is necessarily holistic he explains. "It views all human activity as spiritual, including politics. It sees politics as an opportunity to serve humanity, to heal what needs healing, to reach out to those left behind.

Social charity

Social action, Gonsalves says, should never be used to exploit humanity for personal gain. "I think Pope Francis is perfectly in agreement with this point of view. He himself spells this kind of politics with a capital 'P' to distinguish it from the cheap party politics so commonly practised. He called Politics "a very elevated form of social charity" because politicians are supposed to serve the common good.

Gandhi famously said: "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is." He understood 'religion' in the broad sense of spirituality, and not in the narrow sense of religious exclusivism or fundamentalism.

He called his own belief-system Ethical Religion in which morality and social responsibility were the foundations of all inner-worldly activity in the common human quest for Absolute Truth.

He did not dichotomize the material and spiritual but saw both poles in unity and holistically. It was what he had learned at the Hindu

school of *Advaita*, or non-dualism.

The day politicians (and all of us) are able to look at daily life from a spiritual perspective, and spiritual life as the qualitative improvement of our daily living – that day our politics will work for the benefit of all, including those on the peripheries."

Gandhi and the Trappists

"Gandhi mostly interacted with British Christians who were usually Anglicans or of different Christian sects. He rarely had occasion to encounter Catholics. However, he did have words of praise for certain aspects of Catholicism.

While in South Africa, he visited the Trappist monks at Natal and envisage the type of community best suited to his value system. They provided him with a functioning example of a micro-community living on the basis of voluntary poverty, self-renunciation and constructive work.

He also appreciated Catholic educational institutions, because the majority of teachers chose to be celibate in order to give of themselves entirely to the cause of education.

He respected the Pope and, after the second Round Table Conference on his way from London to India, he requested a stopover in Rome to visit him. This unfulfilled dream could have been motivated by his desire to enlist the Indian Bishops and thus unify the minorities in the pursuit of Independence (*Swaraj*)."

Christ in the life of Gandhi

Gonsalves states that "Gandhi had a profound admiration and esteem for Jesus Christ. He had read the Old Testament with much difficulty and disinterest. But it was the New Testament, and especially the person of Jesus that fascinated him.

The Sermon on the Mount, he said, 'went straight to his heart.' He was most attracted to Jesus' call to 'turn the other cheek'. It resonated with his concept of active nonviolence. He deepened his knowledge of Christ through Tolstoy's book based on the Gospel of Like 17: 21, *The Kingdom of God* is within You, and Christ's love for the least and the last in John Ruskin's *Unto this Last*.

The Crucifix, was a symbol that touched him dearly. It was a perfect example of how a nonviolent seeker after Truth ought to live active nonviolence – that is, the ability not merely to do no harm (passive nonviolence), but also to bear the violence of others without hitting back."

To him Jesus was "one of the greatest teachers humanity has ever had. However, he did not believe that Jesus was God, or the 'only

begotten Son' of God, as Christians do. God is all-transcendent and escapes our finite comprehension. If he begets, then all of us are his begotten sons and daughters. In Jesus, we have someone who, humanly speaking, expressed God's spirit and will as no other could. Only in this sense Gandhi recognized Jesus as the son of God."

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Hind Swaraj, Farms & Ashrams: Gandhian Concept of Education

Heramb Chaturvedi

TO UNDERSTAND GANDHI and his philosophy is a bit arduous and yet simple task. It is simple in the sense as we have more than one hundred volumes of Gandhi's works and arduous because it is difficult to sift materials from them. Moreover, it is difficult because it is not a philosophy spelt out in isolation from practical human affairs, making it philosophy, political science and history- all rolled into one. However, to analyze his basic ideas one has to begin with the 'Hind Swaraj' and its raison d' etre. But even prior to that I would like to share with you all the first school that he had attended at Porbandar – it was named 'Dhool-Shila' – where children were taught to write on mud, soil or ground... thus the contact and connect with soil, nature and ground reality was the basis of his idea of education![1] According to the psychologists what one learns in his formative age remains life-long.

Gandhi had gone to London from South Africa in 1909 to repeal a discriminatory law against the Indians in that country. It was related to 'the Asiatic Registration Amendment Act' gazetted on September 2, 1908. The Act provided three penalities: fine, imprisonment and deportation. When Gandhi arrived in London on July 10 the newspapers and the public were still discussing the assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie nine days before by Madan Lal Dhingra under the influence of Savarkar. The murder made the British opinion turn against the Indians. Gandhi's reaction was in the form of stating clearly his non-violent ideology: "I must say that those who believe and argue that such murders may do good to India are ignorant men indeed. No act of treachery can profit a nation. Even should the British leave in consequence of such murderous acts, who will then rule in their place? The only answer is: the murderers .....India can gain nothing from the rule of murderers – no matter whether they are black or white."[2]

Gandhi still pleaded with the authorities but to no avail. In the meantime, on 24th October 1909, Savarkar invited Gandhi to the Vijay

Dasami celebrations. Gandhi grabbed the opportunity to discuss with him the issue of violence and Hindutva vis-a-vis his philosophy of non-violence, as he confessed to his friend, Henry Polak. Both stuck to their line of reasoning and points of view. While Gandhi talked of Ramrajya to be achieved through ethical politics of non-violence and moral values, Savarkar insisted that even Ram could achieve victory only after use of violence and that is why Vijay Dasami falls after nine days of prayers and fasting of Ma Durga, the symbol of power and force necessary to combat whatever was evil in the society!

Gandhi, on his return journey from London to South Africa, found time to write *Hind Swaraj*, which he described as a reply to the 'Indian School of Violence'. He realised that it was industrialization which resulted in colonialism and aggrandisement.[3] This gave an inhuman face to colonialism which he was fighting in South Africa for more than a decade and a half. Hind Swaraj, a small book of 80 pages was written by Gandhi, originally in Gujarati at the age of 40. He started referring to the 'Satyagrahis' as "Mumukshu"![4]

Gandhi underlined the fact that industrialization had caused the factory system and this led to ever-growing demands of raw materials as well as markets for the manufactured goods. This prompted colonizing of Asian African and South American continents. The greed for more profit saw the ever-growing expansion of factories in a never ending cycle. A perpetuation of the colonial rule to satisfy the industrialized West was then in sight . Thus, exploitation and dismemberment of the traditional socio-economic set-up of the colonies came in the wake of political subjugation. The economies of the colonies were made to serve the interests of the parent economy.[5] In India, it had resulted in the partition of Bengal in 1905. This then had resulted in the 'Swadeshi' movement and the revolutionary movement led by the youth. Thus, Gandhi realized that it was ultimately industrialization which was the root cause of hardships and even raison d'etre of the Hindu School of violence.[6]

II

Balanced industrialization in sync with nature that does not displace human labour was advocated by Gandhi. Man has emerged from nature and human civilization is basically a river-valley civilization, thus a complete balance has to be maintained between man and nature. In this light, if we look at our 'smart cities', the question remains as to whether they have been able to address problems of water-logging, traffic-congestion, air-pollution, water scarcity and the decline of ground-water levels. This was foreseen by Gandhi much before its

evil effects started startling the world. The best examples to study are Japan and Greece. Japan was viewed by Western scholars as 'the coming power..... Then the Japanese bubble burst- along with the Japanese stock market – and the future belonged to someone else.'[7] Similarly, 'By 2010 Greece was flashing red. The EU was no longer boring – it was deeply alarming.'[8] But let me just add one more point to underline the significance of these two nations and their tales of progress on industrial lines.

All western knowledge and even colonization and the concept of world conquest are drawn from the Greek tradition. Similarly, Japan was the only country in Asia to have defeated a Western nation, Russia in 1905, giving a spurt to Asian nationalism. Moreover, after the Hiroshima-Nagasaki episode, Japan could emerge as a leading country because of its high expenditure not on defence and security but education.

Thus, Gandhi's philosophy with his stress on education in practice becomes all the more important. Truly-speaking Gandhi realised that industrialization had led to struggle for colonies amongst the European nations, which in turn generated an arms race and polarization eventually leading to the two great wars, to which he was an eye-witness. He thus realized peaceful co-existence among nations would be possible only if production caters to human need instead of greed. This is the entire philosophical basis of the Hind Swaraj.[9] We have seen how the corporate wars began in the country of 'wild west' as 'cola-wars' and what its repercussions are. Ultimately, the 'corporate culture' has come to govern the world, leading to avarice and inequality on the one hand and 'environmental crisis' on the other.

The current focus on "climate change" rather than environmental issues also gives the corporate world a certain degree of breathing space. Despite 'Davos conventions' or the annual meetings of the 'World Economic Forum', the Western world continue to force the 'developing countries' to cut down on their carbon emissions instead of restricting their own consumption. Secondly, what Gandhi feared and has turned out to be sadly true is the fact that these Corporates have not only captured the Governments the world over and are taking far-reaching decisions adversely affecting the ecological balance everywhere. They have formed their cartels and supplanted true leaders with their henchmen by controlling the media and information network.[10]

Gandhian ideal was a return to the values that ultimately led Greece and Japan resist total collapse. He wanted India to return to true politics built on service rather than power politics. He reminds Nehru about the 'Hind Swaraj', to which he sheepishly replies that he

remembers it hazily. He wants India to treat village as the basic unit of governance akin to a 'face-to-face politics' instead of the mechanization of politics and even democracy – where decisions are taken by 'the party machine, the bureaucratic machine, the money machine.'[11]

Having discussed the crisis caused in Greece and Japan by this modern corporate culture , also called the 'consumerist culture', we may now return to the latest country that supplanted Japan's economic and industrial rise to pre-eminence –China. The change-over from communism to 'state capitalism' and the new spurt in manufacturing has led many people to believ that 'China could be where the next bubble bursts.'[12] With the business already being hit badly and adversely by the Corona virus and its effects with a multiplier effect, we are witnessing what Gandhi had prophesized more than a century ago.

III

Gandhi's philosophy has a 'holistic' approach. Thus we can easily understand that technocracies and continuous growth cannot take a country or economy along the right path unless we adopt a 'humane' approach. Actually what is required but cannot be ever delivered by the corporate world is 'equitable distribution' of the gains. It is against the very theory of Western model of development, which continues to dominate the world. Gandhi as a visionary could foresee all this and warn us that there is enough for everyone's need but not for anyone's greed. That greed of profiteering takes us to the path where the bubble has to burst? It is an established fact of chemistry that everything has a 'saturation point'. Thus bursting of bubbles is the natural outcome – sooner or later?

Gandhi had solved some problems at a personal level through his experiments in 'Community living', by establishing Phoenix or Tolstoy farms in South Africa and Kochrab, Sabarmati and Sewa Gram in India. Let me add a few words about 'Tolstoy' and 'Kochrab' to give us an idea of Gandhian principles practised there. Gandhi who had come to India in 1901 was forced to return to South Africa towards the end of 1902. He made friends with Henry Polak which was to last his lifetime. Polak had read how the Indians were suffering from the black plague in Johannesburg in the beginning of 1904 after the heavy rains and made friends with Gandhi pledging him all support.

In October 1904, when Gandhi was about to leave for Durban to sort out the financial difficulties in bringing out *Indian Opinion*, Polak gave him John Ruskin's book *Unto this Last* to read on the way. The

book inspired him to practise political economy in 'human companionship' and 'social affection'. "The rich should abstain from luxuries until all the poorest too should have enough....."[13] The Phoenix settlement was established after purchasing 100 acres of land for 1000 pounds. Thus began his complete education programme to help and train Indians on the basic principles of equity, equality and fraternity beginning with community living, co-education, co-curricular activities, instilling norms and values promoting harmony, love, compassion without any gender, caste, colour, language and regional bias. He taught only one religion and that was "Religion of Ethics".[14] This farm, indeed, proved to be the best school or institution where future leaders could be trained.

After Gandhi returned from the unsuccessful visit to London in 1909 and had written the 'Hind Swaraj' on his return journey, he decided to establish another farm. Thanks to Gokhale, he received funds, and Herman Kallenbach, another friend, gifted him his own 1,100 acres of farm at Lawley, 20 miles from Johanessburg and named it 'Tolstoy Farm'. Kallenbach himself learnt the craft of leather working and carpentary and taught it to Gandhi and thus vocational training became a key activity at Tolstoy Farm. In 1913, when Gandhi was in jail, he prepared a pair of sandals for General Smuts before leaving the shores of South Africa in July 1914. He returned it to Gandhi in 1939 saying "I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."[15]

After his return to India, on the advice of his guru Gokhale, he toured the length and breadth of the country. He addressed the faculty and students in Benares Hindu Univefsity on February 6, 1916 and condemned himself in speaking in a foreign language. He emphasized the need of education in the vernacular and castigated the people for the lack of sense of cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene. He was critical of the behavious of princes in colourful and expensive attires. Although Gandhi honoured the revolutionaries, he questioned their violent ways and preached non-violence.[16]

Kochrab was the first farm he established in India on May 25, 1915 and was named "Satyagrah Ashram" but he had warned the villagers on their unhygienic behaviour and ultimately after an epidemic (plague) broke out he moved it to Sabarmati, an area of 20 acres, 4 miles north to the then Ahmedabad city. Moreover it was near to the jail too.[17] After the Dandi march in 1936 he moved on to a big farm at Sevgram village just 5 miles east of Wardha ashram, belonging to Jamnalal Bajaj.[18] It had just 600 inhabitants and a muddy road connecting it to the outside world. It even lacked a post office.

This was his idea of Gram Swaraj- it was another laboratory of Gandhi's educational system.

It was here, in these farms and ashrams that he experimented with education, instilling values, teaching professional skills and right 'conduct of life'. In fact, the basic principles of 'Equity, Equality and Fraternity' were reinforced by 'community life' and in such an atmosphere minimization of human needs and a sense of equitable distribution were sought to be fostered. All these experiments contributed to the development of asense of 'collective human dignity' irrespective of caste, creed, colour and wealth.

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Book Reviews

V. K Kool and Rita Agrawal, *Gandhi and the Psychology of Nonviolence, Volume 1 Scientific Roots and Development*, 2020. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan, Pages 334. Rs. 11521(HB). ISBN 978-3-030-56864-1

This book seeks to unravel elements of a theory of nonviolence seen from a psychological point of view. The authors claim that many concepts of psychology can be better understood based on Gandhi's life and work. There are nine chapters in this volume. The first chapter is on moving from resisting violence to promoting nonviolence. The authors take the experimental study conducted by Milgram as their point of departure. It examined why majority of people obey orders blindly, and are willing to undertake extremely cruel acts, in deference to authority, setting aside their moral convictions. However, the focus of attention in the book is more on the minority who decided to defy the authority, which has implications for the evolution of nonaggression and nonviolence. The first author and his associates had conducted experiments to analyse the psychology of nonviolence, especially to understand why some dissident individuals tend to take a nonviolent posture. The authors lament that we can find "ample theories of violence and its sister, aggression, with a passing reference, often only cursorily made, to nonviolence" (p.16). The book refers to the works of leading figures like Freud, and Erikson. It then proceeds to discuss social scientists who have focused on nonviolence and peace such as Gene Sharp, Johan Galtung and Kenneth Boulding, and identifies a similarity of thought between them and Gandhi, particularly on the premise that peace and harmony among humans and with the environment is a necessary condition for sustainable life. The authors conclude that the "seed of nonviolence is often dissent, protest and even disobedience" (p.28).

The second chapter titled 'The Disobedient Gandhi' traces the various influences on him and the people influenced by him in the

furtherance of the cause of nonviolent action, which include academics such as Gene Sharp, Johan Galtung, Kenneth Boulding and activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

The third chapter is an interesting one in that it is based on interviews with the surviving Gandhians many of whom were kin of Gandhi or worked with him. The list is quite impressive considering the year when the manuscript of the book was drafted. We have accounts by Sumitra Kulkarni, Niranjana Kalarthi, Ela Bhat, Nilam Parikh, Bhavani Charan Patnaik, Chandrasekhar Dharmadhikari, Nagin Das Sanghavi, Usha Gokhani, and Radha Bhatt. The book claims that the interviews brought to the fore the fact that people who follow the Gandhian tradition in its true spirit are humble and self- effacing.

Chapter four is on the building blocks of Gandhi's nonviolence. Almost all the aspects dealing with the foundations of Gandhian nonviolence are covered in the chapter. Chapter five is titled 'The Evolution of Nonviolence and Its Neurological Basis'. It discusses the nature and dynamics of cooperation among animals, the neurochemical elements of empathy and the neural-anatomical basis of social behaviour including developments in the concept of the social brain.

The next chapter deals with the interesting theme of measurement of nonviolence. The authors introduce different scales, some of which are proxies of nonviolence. However, measurement of nonviolence is not an easy task. This is partly because of the division between principled and strategic forms of nonviolence as far as the meaning of the term is concerned. Further, the fact that it is at once a value and an act makes the problem even more complex. A more worthwhile exercise would be to compare it with more established measures like the Global Peace Index.

Chapter seven discusses models of nonviolence, and point out how each model falls short on different counts. The authors admit the absence of a robust model of nonviolence.

Chapter eight deals with cognition of nonviolence, and chapter nine sums up the main ideas contained in the book.

Nonviolence is adaptive according to the authors. It is also embedded in culture, socialisation and styles of parenting. The book makes a case for bringing Gandhi to the centre of the field of psychology "ranging from the psychology of morality and religion to that of education, community psychology and organizational behavior"(p. 318).

This is a unique book in that it discusses various theories and models in psychology in relation to Gandhian nonviolence more than any other book I know. Although the author has not succeeded in

linking them all up with Gandhi in a systematic manner, which is a gigantic task in itself, the ideas covered including the research cited are extensive and a boon for people interested in understanding Gandhi and his nonviolence from a psychological point of view. I think that the question of power and hierarchy, which are closely related to violence, also should have received some attention. Most nonviolent advocates tend not to exert power over people or think in hierarchical terms. When entrusted with power, they seem to be non-attached to its trappings. Further, the idea of forgiveness, which has a psychological import, is also a theme worth looking at. Another element is the role of self-suffering in nonviolence and the psychology associated with it. The absence of the insights of notable Gandhi interpreters like Raghavan Iyer and Bhikhu Parekh, particularly in chapter four, is quite glaring.

There are also a few incorrect translations. One also notices considerable repetition. These minor lapses do not deprive the book of its immense value. The book has suitable illustrations in the form of tables, figures, boxes and photos, and a very useful index. I strongly recommend the book to students and researchers in Gandhian Studies and psychology.

JOHN S MOOLAKKATTU
Chief Editor, Gandhi Marg

M V Nadkarni (Ed.) ***Socio-Economic Change and the Broad -Basing Process in India*****, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2020, ISBN 9780367727604, 248 Pages. Rs. 995.**

M V Nadkarni introduces the concept of Broad - Basing as a process by which the deprived and marginalized social groups make a conscious effort to enter the mainstream of social, political, and economic activities to derive the same advantages from the society as those already in the mainstream. The book consists of a collection of twelve articles on Broad-Basing process by established and emerging scholars in the field of sociology, economics, political science, gender studies, environment, and urban studies. They attempt to provide a "probing, comprehensive and critical attention" to this important social process by examining how the Broad-Basing process has worked in pre-Independent and post-Independent India. The book offers a balanced perspective on the process of economic growth and development in India and the biggest highlight is that it does not stop with "rigorous analysis but suggests the way forward".

The editor of the book, M V Nadkarni, explains the concept of Broad-Basing and its working in detail. He offers a holistic and comprehensive view of the 'Broad-Basing process', an idea which was first introduced in his 1997 article in *Economic and Political Weekly.* Nadkarni also looks into the changing social, political, and economic status of Dalits in India and opines that Dalits have shown significant improvements in absolute terms and have become part of the mainstream politics and society despite their economic backwardness. He thinks that though Broad-Basing may take considerable amount of time to resolve the social disparities, it emerge victorious in the end.

Manohar Yadav provides an insider account of the evolution of Dalit movements in Karnataka. He admits that the movements in the state have not been very successful in the state. Anil Kumar Vaddiraju describes the rise of the 'Other Backward Classes' (OBCs) in the political landscape as a 'conspicuous development in Indian politics' and argues that 'some of the OBCs have 'hindered the process of democratization and Broad-Basing". Khalil Shaha and S.Yogeshwari argue that though there has been a process of Broad-Basing across socio-economic and religious groups, the rate of progress of the marginalized groups such as Muslims compared to the rest of the society has not been satisfactory.

Lavanya Suresh reflects upon women empowerment- social, political, and economic and likens it to the Broad-Basing process.

Suresh argues that though Broad-Basing process in terms of gender is still a challenging task in the country, there is now greater awareness about the rights of women. Vinay Kumar looks into the marginalization and empowerment of industrial/non-agricultural workers workers in India. Malini L Tantri and Shruthi Mohan Menon attempt to find an answer to the presence of Broad-Basing process in the economy around themes such as food security, poverty, and unemployment. The authors recommend greater focus on employment generation and a massive boost to village economy to promote Broad-Basing.

R S Deshpande traces the brief history of the progress of digital revolution in India and argues that digital technology has a vast potential for Broad-Basing. He suggests that imaginative and constructive policies are needed to allow people the benefit of moving in the direction of Broad-Basing using technology. Kala S Sridhar looks at urbanization through the lens of Broad-Basing. She argues that urbanization has been positively contributing to the Broad-basing process in the country. Sunil Nautiyal reflects upon the absence of a coherent policy to resettle the forest people through the lens of Broad-Basing process. In the concluding chapter, M V Nadkarni and Subhashree Banerjee deliberate the future of Broad-Basing process in India as it is proving to be inadequate to end marginalization and disparities. The authors suggest that India should increasingly play the role of a welfare state to give a fillip to the Broad-Basing process.

While the general consensus is that the Broad-Basing process is certainly in operation but is not adequate, the concept of Broad-Basing process is a theoretically sound framework for understanding the development paradigm in India. The highlight of the book is that it is all about applying the working knowledge of the Broad-Basing process in all life situations. Nadkarni and the contributors have successfully documented the operationality of Broad- Basing process in terms of caste, class, gender, religion, environment and digital revolution.

Broad- Basing process can be used to assess the socio-economic change taking place in each state in India. For instance, C T Kurien's *Dynamics of Rural Transformation: A Study of Tamil Nadu: (1970-1975)* inspired the Indian Council of Social Science Research to sanction projects to study the rural transformation in different states. Similar attempts can be made across the country. The book is a valuable source material for researchers, policy experts, practitioners and activists who have a passion for social engineering and it generates many hypotheses. Any researcher who reads the book may be tempted to

apply the concept of Broad- Basing in diverse social settings. The book lays the foundation for a strong theory on Broad-Basing. One is also left with the feeling that the Broad-Basing idea has strong affinities with the Gandhian concept of Sarvodaya.

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Examples

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

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