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Editorial

IN THE PASSING of Johan Vincent Galtung on 17 February at the age of 93, the peace studies community and peace movements worldwide who have benefited from his seminal ideas have lost a father figure and an abiding guide. A brilliant and prolific academician who could easily engage in quantitative and qualitative peace studies, he eventually turned to non-Western themes, social cosmology, and world views. He established the renowned *Journal of Peace Research* (1964) and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (1959), the first academic research centre in the world devoted to peace studies. A conscientious objector, influenced by strong anti-war sentiments, Galtung was convinced that nonviolent conflict transformation was the only way to sort out differences among human beings. When peace was seen in a narrow sense as the absence of war and large-scale physical violence alone, he brought fresh air to the field by introducing concepts like structural violence and positive peace. Galtung stated that the idea of structural violence was framed while sitting on the terrace of the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi and that he had in mind the exploitation of Africans by the white minority regime in Rhodesia and the example of Gandhi. Two decades later, he broadened the agenda of peace to include cultural violence, the set of beliefs that legitimate physical and structural violence. When the New Left took up some of the analytical categories of Galtung to suggest the need for a small dose of violence to achieve peace, he came up with the book *The Way is the Goal: Gandhi Today*, which was further developed into *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization,* suggesting that the needed revolution has to be nonviolent, given the irreversibility of the consequences of violence.

Galtung was the originator of the idea of conflict transformation. He used terms like integration and transcendence (transcend is the name of his university) to denote transformation, which John Paul Lederach has popularized. This is perhaps due to the significant

influence of Gandhi on him, harking back to the fifties when he collaborated with Arne Naess to produce the book *Gandhi's Political Ethics*.

He has contributed to peace theory and enlightened us a lot about conflict. His ABC triangle is used to make a better sense of conflict. His notions, such as misplaced or false conflict, are noteworthy. He was one of the critical originators of peace journalism, which has been taken up for further research by several scholars. As a practitioner, he mediated over 100 conflicts across the world.

Peace Studies grew with Galtung; Galtung had views on every conflict, including recent conflagerations like Palestine, Gaza, and Ukraine. Trained as a mathematician and sociologist, he was the personification of transdisciplinary scholarship, which is most appropriate for a discipline like peace studies. Galtung's "Transcend" method is a sophisticated "integrative" approach to conflict transformation and peacebuilding that combines actor-oriented, structure-oriented, and culture-oriented approaches.

Galtung was on the Editorial Advisory Board of Gandhi Marg. Although he has not published extensively in the journal, his presence on the board inspired the editors who staffed it during different periods. It also helped enhance the journal's status.

JOHN S. MOOLAKKATTU
Chief Editor

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Towards a Political Solution to the Kashmir Conflict: Exploring Options after the Repeal of Article 370

Aijaz Ahmad Dar

ABSTRACT

The Kashmir conflict, a longstanding issue between India and Pakistan since 1947, presents a significant risk to the stability of South Asia. This study offers a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of the conflict, shedding light on the persistent zero-sum game that has characterized the relationship between the two nations since its inception. It also examines the various attempts to address and resolve the conflict over the years. However, a significant turning point occurred on August 5, 2019, when the Indian government revoked Article 370, altering the conflict dynamics. This action rendered previously proposed solutions unfeasible. As a result, negotiations between the parties came to a standstill, and the conflict's intractability became even more pronounced. This paper aims to provide insightful strategies for mitigating the intractable nature of the conflict and proposes innovative avenues for addressing the complexities that have hindered resolution efforts.

Key words: *Kashmir conflict; article 370 abrogation; intractability; ripeness; Conflict- Resolution;*

Introduction

JAMMU AND KASHMIR is situated in the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent and possesses a strategically significant geographic location. The erstwhile state is strategically located at the crossroads of Central and South Asia, sharing borders with India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China.[1] The modern state of J and K was

established in March 1846, when Maharaja Gulab Singh acquired Kashmir through the Treaty of Amritsar.[2] In the year 1947, owing to territorial realignments and military conquests, Jammu and Kashmir encompassed a landmass of 222,870 square kilometers[3], with its population being predominantly comprised of Muslims[4], (77 percent) Hindus,[5] (20 percent), and other minority groups[6] (3 percent). The first Indo-Pak conflict in 1947-48 and the Chinese incursion in 1962 resulted in the partition of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir among India, Pakistan, and China. India's territorial share amounted to 45 percent, encompassing the regions of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Pakistan's jurisdiction extended over 35 percent of the land, including so called Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, while China's control extended to 20 percent of the territory, specifically the Aksai Chin area.[7]

The roots of the Kashmir conflict can be traced back to the tumultuous year of 1947, a watershed moment in the history of the Indian subcontinent when British India underwent partition, giving rise to the two independent nations of India and Pakistan. Amid this complex reconfiguration, there were 562 princely states, and Jammu and Kashmir were among the most significant and sizeable.[8] It was during this period of political upheaval that the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir exercised his right to accede to India on October 26, 1947, a decision that Pakistan vehemently opposed, considering it a violation of the principles that underpinned the partition. Since then, deep-seated differences in perspective have proved to be insurmountable, preventing Pakistan and India from reaching a mutually agreeable resolution to the Kashmir issue.[9] For over seven decades, both countries have engaged in prolonged conflicts over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, employing both military force and diplomatic negotiations in their efforts. Both nations have sought to integrate this region into their respective territories, yet neither has been successful in achieving this goal.[10]

India's Perspective on Events Leading to Accession

Upon the announcement of the British partition plan on June 3, 1947, the Indian National Congress articulated its position, declaring its non-recognition of the princely states as sovereign dominions. In this context, the Congress conveyed to the Maharaja of Kashmir the option to integrate his state with emerging dominions. Significantly, due to its Muslim-majority population, it was recommended that the Maharaja undertake a process of ascertaining the will of the people before arriving at a decision.[11] As India's independence approached, the Maharaja of Kashmir displayed an ambivalent disposition but seemed

inclined towards seeking an independent status.[12] In pursuit of this objective, Hari Singh, the Maharaja, endeavored to negotiate a standstill agreement with India and Pakistan concurrently. While India did not reject this proposal, it postponed its response due to unresolved issues. In contrast, Pakistan expeditiously endorsed the agreement. However, in the ensuing weeks, the relationship between the Maharaja and Pakistan deteriorated. To wrest control of the situation from the Maharaja, Pakistan orchestrated an invasion of Kashmir.[13] This incursion, initially led by tribal forces under Pakistani commanders, eventually saw the involvement of the Pakistani army.[14]

Faced with this intrusive threat, the Maharaja of Kashmir appealed to the Indian government for assistance in repelling the invaders. The Indian government, however, stipulated that its military intervention was contingent upon the formal accession of Kashmir to India. Consequently, on October 26, 1947, the Maharaja acceded to India, prompting the deployment of Indian troops to expel the invading forces from Kashmir.[15] Taking into consideration the demographic composition of the state, the Indian government insisted on the inclusion of Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, in the state's administration and further mandated that the accession be subject to ratification by the will of the people.[16]

From the Indian perspective, the Maharaja formally executed the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, and India upheld its commitment to seek popular approval of this accession by conducting elections for the state's constituent assembly in 1951. Subsequently, the state was integrated into India as articulated in the constitution adopted by the state's constituent assembly in 1957.[17]

Pakistan's Perspective on Events Leading to Accession

According to the Pakistani perspective, the tribal invasion was a spontaneous response to the oppression and brutalization of Kashmiri Muslims by the Dogra Maharaja. The killing of Muslims and the accession that followed prompted the Pathans to defend their fellow Muslims. The Pakistani troops followed in reaction to the Indian government's decision to send its forces to Kashmir.[18] The Pakistani government also began to assert that the accession resulted from a well-developed Indian conspiracy, sponsored by Lord Mountbatten, to connect Kashmir to India and prevent its accession to Pakistan. The district of Gurdaspur, despite being a Muslim majority district, was ceded to India because it was India's only land connection to Kashmir. This transfer facilitated the process of accession.[19] Pakistan also claims that the state's Standstill Agreement with Pakistan, the

declaration of an "Azad J&K" government prior to accession, and the conditional nature of the accession rendered the accession null and void. Moreover, the opinion of the state's citizens has not been decided in a globally acceptable way.[20]

Congress and Muslim League in Zero-Sum Battle

In the context of the British government's 1946 decision to partition India, the proposal was to create Pakistan as a separate nation, delineating its boundaries through the Radcliffe Boundary Commission. [21] It is noteworthy that the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League concurred that the two-nation doctrine, the foundational principle of India's partition, did not extend to the princely states.[22] The transfer of authority was specifically confined to territories and provinces directly administered by the British, encompassing roughly 54 percent of the subcontinent. [23] In a similar vein, Jinnah contended that the Lahore resolution solely pertained to British India and excluded the princely states.[24]The British paramountcy over these princely states was expected to come to an end upon the departure of the British, as outlined in the Cabinet Mission Plan. This would have meant that the states would regain their independence. However, they were strongly encouraged to join either the Indian or Pakistani dominions through the establishment of a new federal partnership or other political arrangements.[25]

Despite their mutual acceptance of the Partition Plan, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League held different interpretations regarding the implications of paramountcy. In contrast to the British government's rationale for paramountcy, Congress asserted that the lapse of paramountcy did not automatically bestow independence upon the princely states. From their perspective, the people's will represented the paramount consideration in a state's decision to join India or Pakistan. Even in cases of disagreement with the ruler's preferences, the will of the people was deemed to prevail ultimately.[26] In contrast, Jinnah provided a legal interpretation of the lapse of paramountcy, asserting on July 30, 1947, that with the termination of paramountcy, all princely states would regain their complete sovereignty and independence. This would give them the choice to align with either of the two dominions or remain independent.[27]

These contrasting interpretations between the two parties emanated from their broader political agendas. Both entities sought to accomplish substantial political objectives by not extending the two-nation theory to princely states and providing contrasting elucidations of the lapse of paramountcy. The Indian National Congress aimed to

unify princely states and expand its territorial boundaries to avoid further territorial losses to Pakistan. The Muslim League, on the contrary, had the goal of persuading as many princely states as possible to either join Pakistan or remain independent. Recognizing that Pakistan had been established as a smaller and fragmented entity, Jinnah realized that incorporating the princely states was imperative to expand its territorial reach.[28]

The two parties' divergent positions emerged due to a zero-sum game in the political arena, where each party sought to maximise its own interests. Jinnah aimed to hinder the unification of India and if possible, balkanize it, to minimise the territorial size and demographic differences between India and Pakistan.[29] For Jinnah, it was politically imperative to champion the rights of rulers, as this offered the prospect of gaining control over Junagadh and Hyderabad. Both these princely states were under Muslim rulers. In the case of Kashmir, ruled by a non-Muslim, Jinnah was cognizant of the tensions between the Maharaja and the Congress, particularly with Nehru, and foresaw the possibility that Kashmir, given its geographical and demographic characteristics, might eventually align with Pakistan. By acknowledging the rights of rulers, Jinnah sought to secure Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Kashmir, weaving a complex web of political maneuvering to achieve his envisioned strategic gains.[30]

In contrast, Congress was politically compelled to align with the people's will, given the significant Hindu population residing in numerous princely states.[31] In the context of Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim-majority state, Sheikh Abdullah emerged as a prominent and influential figure. He staunchly aligned with India's objectives, particularly in harmony with Nehru's vision, and possessed the capacity to ensure Kashmir's accession to India.[32] For the Indian National Congress, aligning with the popular will presented the prospect of securing Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Kashmir . Thus, in the contest for princely states, Jinnah found himself on the losing side of the conflict., resulting in the loss of not just Kashmir but also Hyderabad and Junagadh. This outcome was somewhat attributed to Jinnah's overly optimistic expectations that did not align with the realities on the ground.The course of sub-continental history could have taken a different turn if Jinnah had consented to a simultaneous plebiscite in Hyderabad and Kashmir, an option offered by Mountbatten following the tribal invasion of Kashmir. A democratic resolution might have proven more effective than one that relied on the use of force.[33]

POSITION OF PAKISTAN ON KASHMIR

A combination of military force and diplomatic efforts has characterized Pakistan's approach to the Kashmir issue. Pakistan has not hesitated to employ its military might when it believed it could advance its objective of gaining control over Kashmir. This military-focused approach has been demonstrated through various conflicts, including the 1947-1948 war, the 1965 war, the 1999 Kargil conflict, and the ongoing insurgency in Kashmir, to alter the existing status quo in its favor. Conversely, when Pakistan perceived itself as politically constrained or recognized that international public opinion would not support a military strategy, it shifted its focus to advocating for bilateral dialogues.[34]

Pakistan's official stance on the Kashmir issue is rooted in the historical context following the end of British colonial rule in undivided India. The status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir has remained contentious since then. Notably, the state's accession to India in October 1947 was conditional, and this conditional accession has been legally recognized through resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council on August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949. Importantly, both India and Pakistan accepted and continue to abide by these resolutions. Both countries accepted these resolutions and continue to have full force and effect to this day. Neither party can unilaterally withdraw from it. The negotiations over the future status of the state should prioritise staging a free, impartial, and internationally supervised plebiscite to protect the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people, as mandated by the U.N. Security Council resolution.[35]

Position of India on Kashmir

Since the inception of the Kashmir conflict in 1948, India has consistently advocated for a resolution that maintains the existing status quo, with minor adjustments to rationalize the border. In contrast, Pakistan has never agreed to such a settlement and has attempted various approaches to change the status quo. However, India's stance on Kashmir underwent a significant shift in the 1990s due to Pakistan's support for terrorism in the region. India began to assert sovereignty claims over the portion of Kashmir that Pakistan occupied. This shift was highlighted by a resolution passed in February 1994 by both houses of the Indian parliament, calling on Pakistan to withdraw from the forcibly occupied areas of Jammu and Kashmir. During the tenure of Prime Ministers Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir was not actively addressed due to

backchannel negotiations between the two nations.[36] However, the Modi government has pursued a different approach compared to previous Indian administrations. While past governments since the late 1940s have favored seeking a resolution to the Kashmir issue based on the existing territorial status quo, the Narendra Modi government has consistently emphasized India's claims to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.[37]

India's official position on Kashmir is rooted in the state's accession to India on October 26, 1947, when it became an integral part of the country. Since its accession, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has been a fundamental part of the country. Regardless of the circumstances, the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union is legal and final and cannot be contested. India's sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir has not been altered by accepting the U.N. resolutions of August 13, 1948, January 5, 1949, or any subsequent instrument. The only aspect of the dispute that is legally acceptable in discussions between the two countries over the future existence of the state is the need for Pakistan to vacate unlawfully acquired areas. Otherwise, the future position of the state is a domestic issue that must be resolved "within the confines of the Indian Constitution.[38]

Pakistan and India's Interests in Kashmir

The persistent conflict between India and Pakistan in the region of Kashmir is significantly driven by the area's importance in terms of national security and water resources.[39] Kashmir's strategic and resource-rich location makes it a focal point of contention between the two nations. Multiple rivers, including the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab, flow through this region, and these waterways hold immense importance for Pakistan's agricultural sector. The control of these rivers, which originate in Kashmir, lies with India, giving it the potential to impact Pakistan's economy by regulating the flow of water. To address these concerns and ensure an equitable distribution of water, the Indus Water Treaty was established in 1962.[40] This landmark agreement granted Pakistan authority over the western rivers, namely the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab, while India gained control over the eastern branches, including the Ravi, Satluj, and Beas. Despite this treaty, Pakistan maintains apprehensions that this arrangement could be jeopardized in times of conflict. India, through its control of the Kashmir region, holds the capacity to restrict the flow of water into Pakistan. Although India has not taken such measures, However, from the Pakistani perspective, the possibility remains, and this underscores the continued significance of Kashmir to Pakistan's national interests.[41]

In addition to its substantial contributions to water resources,

Kashmir also holds considerable geopolitical importance, functioning as a pivotal bridge between South Asia and Central Asia. The geopolitical ramifications are extensive, if India were to control the entirety of Kashmir, Pakistan would lose its land route to China, thus impacting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Conversely, if Pakistan were to gain complete control of Kashmir, India would be severed from direct access to Central Asia.[42] Currently, the segment of Kashmir that links India with Central Asia is under Pakistan's control, serving as a key determinant influencing India's regional connectivity. This strategic control, by Pakistan, significantly influences trade routes, regional connectivity, and broader geopolitical strategies in the region.The strategic importance of P.O.K and the hindrances it creates for India's regional connectivity were emphasized by NSA Ajit Doval during his recent visit to Kazakhstan.[43]

Article 370 Abrogation: Shifting Paradigms in South Asian Geopolitics

The revocation of Article 370 and the consequential changes in the status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 marked a significant turning point in the complex and longstanding conflict between India and Pakistan over the region. This pivotal moment has had far-reaching implications for the region, international diplomacy, and the aspirations of the people living in this contested territory. Article 370 granted a special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, allowing it a degree of autonomy in its governance. Simultaneously, Article 35A gave the state's legislative assembly the authority to define permanent residents and confer them with unique privileges, such as exclusive land rights.[44] The Indian government's decision to abolish Article 370, was based on a three-fold justification. Firstly, it was seen as a measure to counter extremism and separatism in the Kashmir Valley. Secondly, it aimed to prevent Pakistan from gaining a stronger foothold in the region. Lastly, it was perceived as an obstacle to the integration of Kashmir with the rest of India.[45]

Following New Delhi's unilateral decision to alter the status of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan found itself in a precarious situation. The Indian government's move had seemingly changed the dynamics of the conflict, leaving Pakistan with limited options. Accepting the new reality would entail domestic political costs while resisting India's actions could lead to material and long-term consequences.[46] By taking this bold step in August 2019, the Indian government appeared to have closed the door on a diplomatic resolution to the Kashmir conflict with Pakistan. It unequivocally stated that there would be no negotiations with Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. The only subject of discussion with Pakistan would be the status of Pakistan-occupied

Kashmir.[47]

In response to this scenario, Pakistan initiated a diplomatic offensive aimed at denouncing and undermining Indian actions in Kashmir. Pakistan highlighted the potential implications of India's policy shift on human rights and its effects on bilateral and regional relations. To garner international support, Pakistan, through its ally China, attempted to raise the issue at the United Nations Security Council. However, it faced opposition from other permanent members who rebuffed these efforts. Pakistan also endeavored to gain the backing of friendly countries in declaring the revocation of Article 370 as a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, it warned the world community of the possibility of an increase in violence in the Kashmir Valley and even an open confrontation with India. Despite these efforts, there has been no large-scale conflict with Pakistan or a widespread outbreak of violence in the region, and international condemnation has been limited. It seems that Pakistan's attempt to internationalize the Kashmir issue has not yielded the desired results, and India has succeeded in consolidating its control over the region.[48] With its traditional approaches exhausted and few viable options at hand, Pakistan has begun to consider granting provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan as a response to India's actions in August 2019.[49] These post-2019 developments have rendered it increasingly difficult to contemplate offering autonomy to any part of Kashmir.

Article 370: Abrogation and Ripeness in the Kashmir Conflict

Negotiation is a complex process, and it often hinges on two fundamental approaches. The first perspective suggests that the effectiveness of conflict resolution relies on the content of the proposals presented. Parties in negotiations may reach a resolution by compromising, finding a middle ground between their respective positions, or identifying mutually beneficial outcomes. The second perspective argues that the timing of resolution efforts is crucial for successful conflict resolution. Parties tend to resolve their disputes when they are prepared to do so, typically when unilateral approaches to achieving a satisfactory outcome are impeded and the parties find themselves in a stalemate or a costly predicament. At this point, individuals are more likely to embrace concepts that have existed for an extended period but are now gaining appeal.[50]

The Kashmir conflict, which has simmered for decades, has reached a point where neither side can easily alter the status quo. It has stagnated to a detrimental point, affecting the well-being of the parties involved and necessitating a solution that is acceptable to all parties.

Since the inception of the Kashmir conflict, Pakistan has employed various strategies to change the status quo, with varying degrees of success. In 1965, Pakistan attempted to change it by force, but this approach did not yield the desired results. After Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war, it supported the Kashmir insurgency, portraying it as an indigenous independence movement against oppressive Indian rule. However, this resulted in the loss of thousands of lives but failed to change the status quo.[51]

Following the Indian government's revocation of Article 370, Pakistan shifted to a diplomatic offensive, forging alliances with other countries such as China, Turkey, and organizations like the O.I.C. Despite these efforts, none succeeded in altering the status quo. In fact, Pakistan's increasingly aggressive stance towards India has had economic, social, and global repercussions. Pakistan's military support for terrorist organizations not only led to the country's inclusion on the Financial Action Task Force's grey list but also contributed to the radicalization of Pakistani youth.[52] Consequently, Pakistan has grappled with severe economic challenges and found itself internationally isolated. The sustainability of Pakistan's substantial military expenditure in the long term is uncertain, especially given the current economic instability and mounting populist pressures on the military. These factors collectively make it increasingly improbable that Pakistan can alter the status quo through the use of force. Moreover, Pakistan faces a significant challenge in exerting pressure on India to change the existing state of affairs, primarily due to India's comparative advantages in both its economy and military power.[53] In a significant development, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shahbaz Sharif, has expressed the country's desire for earnest and genuine negotiations with India regarding the issue of Kashmir. Sharif acknowledged that Pakistan had learned valuable lessons from its previous conflicts with India and emphasized the nation's current aspiration for amicable relations with its neighbor.[54]

India, on the other side of the equation led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has consistently emphasized its territorial claims to the part of Kashmir, which is currently under Pakistan's control. Indian political leaders and military officials have expressed their desire to reclaim Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.[55] India's Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, has asserted India's commitment to implement the resolution adopted in the parliament in 1994 concerning the retrieval of P.O.K.[56] India's strategic shift is undoubtedly a potent diplomatic bargaining chip. However, it may not be as effective on the military front. In the event of a military operation by India in P.O.K, China would likely intervene, given its significant interests in the China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor. Any such endeavor by India could compel Beijing to open a second front along the Line of Actual Control.[57] Even if India manages a two-front war, there remains the potential for a nuclear confrontation with Pakistan. It has made it clear that it would resort to nuclear weapons if the survival of the state is in jeopardy. This could happen if India occupies a significant portion of its territory.[58] Furthermore, the annexation of P.O.K. would extend India's borders to Afghanistan, currently controlled by the Taliban. This border could put India in a vulnerable position from a geostrategic perspective. Therefore, any effort by India to alter the status quo through the use of force would not be a feasible decision.The existing status quo itself is costly for India. It consumes resources and impedes India's rise. Given these factors, it is imperative for India to seek a resolution to the Kashmir conflict.[59]

The revocation of Article 370 has brought about a significant transformation in the situation in Kashmir, particularly in the Kashmir Valley. One of the most notable changes has been dismantling the separatist leadership that had long played a central role in the region's politics. For years, separatist leaders had been at the forefront of the Kashmir conflict, advocating for greater autonomy or even independence from India. However, following the revocation of Article 370, which had granted a special status to Jammu and Kashmir, these separatist leaders found themselves marginalized, and their influence diminished. In the following years, Kashmir experienced a notable shift towards peace and stability. Over the last four years, the region has witnessed a significant reduction in violent protests, such as stone-pelting and strikes that had frequently disrupted daily life.[60] Perhaps the most striking change in Kashmir has been the shift in political aspirations. The region's political discourse has transitioned from the once-dominant separatist narrative to a focus on restoring statehood and protecting land and job rights.[61]

The establishment of the Gupkar alliance after the abrogation of Article 370 is significant as it provides a platform for diverse voices to contribute to the peace process. This alliance mainly consists of mainstream political parties that collectively represent the majority of Kashmiris. This coalition has advocated for the restoration of statehood and the protection of the region's special rights.[62] The formation of the Gupkar alliance will aid in the facilitation of the Kashmir peace process, a task that would have been more challenging without this alliance.[63]These recent developments, in the wake of the repeal of Article 370, have created a conducive environment for resolving the Kashmir conflict.

The Kashmir conflict has reached a point where neither party can

easily change the status quo, and the use of force is fraught with risks. The geopolitical implications and the potential for escalation to nuclear confrontation make it imperative for both countries to seek diplomatic and negotiated solutions. The recent developments in the region, including the transformation of political aspirations in Kashmir, have created an opportunity for constructive dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution. Both countries need to seize this opportunity and work towards a lasting resolution to the Kashmir conflict that considers the aspirations and well-being of the region's people.

Potential Solutions and their Practicality

The Kashmir conflict is a multifaceted issue encompassing both interstate and intrastate dimensions. On one front, it revolves around a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. On the other hand, it delves into intricate negotiations between Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir to determine the appropriate level of autonomy for the state.[64] This conflict has persisted for a staggering 76 years, growing increasingly intricate with time. Over forty proposals have been presented to address the Kashmir conflict, but none have been successful due to the unyielding positions held by Islamabad and New Delhi.[65]

In the early years of the Kashmir conflict, the United Nations attempted to mediate a solution by proposing a general or restricted referendum under the supervision of U.N. observers.[66] However, these early solutions, presented by General McNaughton, Sir Owen Dixon, and Frank P. Graham on behalf of the United Nations, failed to satisfy the conflicting parties.[67] One significant point of contention has been the demilitarization process, with India and Pakistan unable to reach a consensus on this matter.[68] Consequently, India has consistently rejected all Security Council resolutions, considering them irrelevant and outdated. India argues that the United Nations 1949 plebiscite recommendation, initially accepted by India, could not be upheld indefinitely.[69] Furthermore, the Shimla Accord of 1972, which committed both countries to resolve their issues through bilateral negotiations, explicitly ruled out any third-party involvement.[70]

Due to the limitations of the United Nations in addressing the conflict and China's aggression against India in 1962, the United States and the United Kingdom attempted to mediate. Between 1962 and 1963, six rounds of talks were held between India and Pakistan. These negotiations included India's proposal to establish the ceasefire line as a permanent international boundary, subject to minor adjustments.[71] However, these talks were fruitless because both India and Pakistan were unwilling to alter their fundamental positions on the Kashmir

issue. The failure of the 1962-63 negotiations led to the 1965 war. Following India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 and the signing of the Shimla Accord in 1972. The Kashmir issue remained relatively dormant in India-Pakistan dialogues until the 1990s when the Kashmir Valley witnessed a significant uprising and the South Asian region became nuclearized. It was only with the Lahore Declaration of 1999 that the Kashmir issue was reintroduced in India-Pakistan negotiations.[72]

Following the nuclearization of South Asia in May 1998, the search for potential resolutions became more intensive, and various theories and models were presented in academic and political circles. Some prominent solutions include the Andorra model, the Sumantra Bose model, the Northern Ireland model, the Trieste-like solution, the Chenab formula, the Kashmir study group proposal, the Musharaf formula, Vajpayee doctrine of Insaniyat, Kashmiriyat, and Jummuriyat, greater autonomy by the national conference and self-rule by the P.D.P.[73]The idea of Kashmir attaining independence, was also proposed by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation front.[74] However, it was rejected by both India and Pakistan. The singular consensus shared by both nations in the context of the Kashmir conflict is their resolute opposition to the idea of granting independence to any part of the region, given the inherent risks it poses to their strategic interests[75] The era between 2002 and 2007 was marked by a high level of diplomatic engagement between India and Pakistan, resulting in one of the finest stages of their relationship. By most accounts, the basis of the negotiations was a four-point formula proposed by Musharraf.[76] The proposed formula comprised four points, which entailed the gradual withdrawal of military personnel and the preservation of the existing borders of Kashmir. The proposal suggests that individuals residing in Jammu and Kashmir would have unrestricted mobility across the Line of Control. The proposal also advocates for self-governance without complete independence and proposes a collaborative oversight mechanism involving all the parties in Jammu and Kashmir.[77] By mid-2007, the parties had discussed these points in minute detail and were inching closer to a compromise. According to former Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, despite disagreements on a few issues, India and Pakistan were close to reaching an agreement.[78] However, the backchannel deal began to dwindle in the early months of 2007, when Pakistan underwent political turmoil, and the succeeding government rejected the proposed formula, stating that it was a personal perspective of Musharraf that did not receive endorsement from the parliament or the cabinet.[79]

Since the late 2010s, formal ties between India and Pakistan have seen a total collapse, first over the terror strikes in Uri, Pathankot,

and Pulwama, and later in August 2019 following India's decision to repeal Article 370. Since August 2019, New Delhi has repeatedly argued that it will not discuss the Kashmir issue with Pakistan except to discuss the status of Kashmir under Pakistani occupation. Pakistan has also insisted that no discussions can be conducted with India until India reverses its Kashmir decision.[80] Despite this formal stalemate, India and Pakistan have held backchannel talks and implemented a new ceasefire along the Line of Control since 2021.[81] Recent constructive developments in India-Pakistan relations have raised hopes for a revival of dialogue, which came to a halt in 2007. Returning to the framework that guided the backchannel discussions between Manmohan Singh and Musharaf is not a viable option. The abrogation of Article 370 and Pakistan's plan to grant provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan as a response to India's act has changed the conflict dynamics. These developments after August 2019 have rendered it difficult to provide autonomy to either portion of Kashmir, which was a basic requisite for the Musharaf-Manmohan talks.[82]

PROPOSALS	MAIN THEME	PRACTICALITY
AGL McNaughton[83] (1949) Owen Dixon[84] (1950) Joseph Korbel[85] (1954) Ayesha Jalal[87] (1990) J.K.L.F[88]. (1976) Plebiscite Front[89] (1955)	Plebiscite	Negated by Shimla agreement (1972)
Chenab formula[90] (1963) Mushtaq-ur-Rahman[91] (1996) Saeed Shafqat[92] (1995)	Partition	Negated by Musharaf-Manmohan talks(2006-2008)
Andorra model[93] (2000) Sumantra Bose[94] (2003) Manmohan Shingh[95] (2004) Kuldip Nayyar[96] (2004)	Status quo with autonomy	Negated by abrogation of Article 370 (2019)
Livingston proposal[97] (1998) Musharaf Formula[98] (2006) Strategic Foresight Group[99] (2005)	Joint management	

Kashmir Conflict Resolution: A Positive-Sum Approach after the Abrogation of Article 370

A realistic option for resolving the Kashmir conflict, especially after the abrogation of Article 370, necessitates a nuanced approach that distinguishes between the parties' positions and their underlying interests. This approach aligns with a fundamental principle of conflict resolution, emphasizing that finding common ground based on shared interests is often more effective rather than rigid positions, as demonstrated in a hypothetical neighborly dispute over a tree. In this case, both neighbors claim that the tree is on their property, making it impossible to physically split the tree in two, leaving no room for traditional negotiation. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent that the two neighbors have distinct interests tied to the tree. One neighbor is primarily interested in enjoying the fruit it bears, while the other neighbor values the shade it provides. These interests, in fact, are not fundamentally contradictory. This situation highlights an important principle: it is often much simpler to find common ground when focusing on underlying interests rather than rigid positions.[100]

The proposals put forth over the years in attempts to resolve the Kashmir conflict have often been zero-sum in nature, where one side's gain equates to the other's loss. To move towards a feasible solution, a positive-sum approach is essential. After careful consideration, it appears that accepting the existing Line of Control, followed by interest sharing, offers the most promising positive-sum strategy for addressing the Kashmir conflict. The 1947 ceasefire line, which eventually evolved into the L.O.C, has provided a vital security buffer for both India and Pakistan. If one party were to establish complete control over the entire region, it could potentially jeopardize the security of the other. For instance, if India were to occupy the entirety of Kashmir, it might create security concerns for Pakistan's Punjab and northwest frontier province and disrupt the land route to China. Likewise, if Pakistan were to occupy the entire Kashmir region, it could pose a security threat to India's Punjab. The present division of the state has effectively mitigated these security concerns, as the LoC has served as a demarcation line.[101]

India and Pakistan have maintained opposing positions on the territorial status of Kashmir. However, it is essential to recognize that their interests are not inherently incompatible. India's interest lies in securing a land route to Central Asia through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir , which is under Pakistan's control. In contrast, Pakistan's interest centers on the rivers of Kashmir, which fall under India's control. The divergence creates an opportunity for constructive dialogue, underscoring the importance of shifting from a narrow

territorial focus to a more collaborative approach centered around shared interests. Under this approach, the status quo represented by the existing Line of Control would be maintained, with an added emphasis on accommodating each others interests. Pakistan, could grant India access to Central Asia through P.O.K, while India could reciprocate by addressing Pakistan's concerns related to the Indus Water Treaty. This collaborative arrangement is a win-win scenario, with India gaining valuable access to Central Asia and Pakistan securing its water resources, fostering a more stable relationship.

For the intrastate dimension of the conflict within the region of Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian Constitution offers a robust framework to address and accommodate various regional aspirations. These provisions, such as Article 371, grant special privileges to several Indian states, including Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Sikkim etc. These constitutional provisions are designed to cater to the unique needs of different states.[102] Extending Article 371A to Jammu and Kashmir, akin to its application in Nagaland, presents a potential avenue for mitigating numerous concerns and apprehensions within the local population, especially in the wake of the demographic changes and heightened anxieties about the erosion of cultural identity following the repeal of Article 370. The extension of Article 371A has the potential to address these concerns and contribute to the reduction of violence against non-locals, a concerning trend that has emerged since the abrogation of Article 370.[103] This surge in violence against non-locals is often linked to concerns related to demographic shifts and the potential loss of cultural identity. By extending Article 371 to Jammu and Kashmir, these concerns can be effectively alleviated, fostering an environment of inclusivity and harmony within the region

thus, adopting a nuanced approach that recognizes the distinction between positions and interests, preserving the existing Line of Control and emphasizing interest sharing offers a practical and positive-sum strategy for resolving the Kashmir conflict. This approach, coupled with the application of relevant constitutional provisions, holds the potential to create a more peaceful and harmonious future for the region.

Conclusion

The abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir has introduced significant shifts in the conflict dynamics. In many ways, it has disrupted the previously entrenched positions held by separatist groups and Pakistan. The destiny of Pakistan has been sealed in Kashmir, and a merger with Pakistan is no longer an option for Kashmiris. This altered landscape has created a more conducive environment for resolving

the Kashmir issue. Both India and Pakistan must recognize, that attempts to change the territorial status quo through competitive means would only lead to further escalation of the conflict. Dialogue emerges as the only viable pathway towards a lasting solution in this context. Since the abrogation of Article 370, India and Pakistan have experienced a period marked by minimal diplomatic engagement. The opportunities for bilateral meetings have dwindled, and optimism for a breakthrough has become scarce. However, it is important to acknowledge that missed opportunities, hatred, distrust, and strife have characterized the historical relationship between the two nations. History teaches us that enduring peace agreements often emerge as acceptable solutions to both parties after a considerable passage of time. Achieving peace between India and Pakistan remains a feasible goal, but both nations must refrain from taking extreme positions. To pave the way for lasting peace, India and Pakistan need to rekindle the threads of peace dialogue, revisiting the spirit of cooperation evident in 2008. A middle ground should be developed that considers the interests of all parties involved. Crucially, both nations must work towards accommodating each other's interests while maintaining the current territorial status quo. Pakistan needs to fulfill its commitment to prevent the support of terrorist activities in Kashmir, and India needs to restore political democracy in the region, accompanied by necessary provisions for addressing the regional aspirations within the framework of the Indian constitution. Ultimately, the attainment of peace in the Indian subcontinent is intrinsically tied to the resolution of the Kashmir issue. It necessitates a high level of statesmanship, devoid of emotions, historical grievances, and political sensitivities.

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Rammanohar Lohia: A Heretical Gandhian?

Bibek Broto Talukder

ABSTRACT

Rammanohar Lohia— the foremost oppositional socialist leader in the 1950s and 60s and one of the most original socialist thinkers in India, is credited with infusing Gandhian ideals in socialist politics. His speech of May 1952, delivered at the Pachmarhi conference of the Socialist Party, was instrumental in bringing important policy changes in the Socialist Party. However, his invocation of Gandhi was not without necessary alterations. These alterations were important in differentiating the ideals of Lohia from those of Gandhi himself and other Gandhians of post-independence India. This article attempts to look into the complexities, innovativeness, and reinterpretations surrounding the appropriation of Gandhian ideals by Lohia while focusing on three distinct fields— the role of the state in a post-colonial/decolonized world, the perennial relevance of satyagraha, and the struggle against the caste-system.

Key words: *Rammanohar Lohia, M. K. Gandhi, Socialism, Gandhism, Caste-system*

"The first half of the twentieth century produced two novel phenomena, atomic Bomb and Mahatma Gandhi, and the century's second half will struggle and suffer to make its choice between the two."

—Mahatma Gandhi and Atom Bomb—
Two Novel Phenomena of 20th Century.[1]

"… I do not like this language of anti and pro. I am neither anti-Marx nor pro-Marx, and that equally applies to my attitude towards Mahatma Gandhi."

—Neither Anti-Marx Nor Pro-Marx.[2]

Introduction

IN 1963, WHILE writing the preface for his most well-known

collection of essays, Rammanohar Lohia— one of the leading Indian socialist leaders of the 1950s and 1960s— divided his contemporary followers of Mohandas Gandhi into three categories: the governmental, the priestly, and the heretical Gandhians. He accused the first two categories of betraying the principles of Gandhi. His attacks aimed at the Congress government of Jawaharlal Nehru and the *Bhoodan* movement of Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narayan. According to Lohia, they had made a mockery of Gandhi by highlighting the ephemeral traits of his teachings, like the *charkha,* without realising and implementing its enduring meanings, which is, in this case, controllable technology and self-sufficient village government. He asserted that Gandhism had acquired a "staid, respectable and colourlessly conservative character"[3] in the hands of these disciples and had completely lost its revolutionary potential. These two wings have come "together to comprise what is authoritatively accepted as Gandhism,"[4] Lohia lamented, in India and around the world. Lohia insisted that the attitude of the priestly and the governmental Gandhians to blindly follow Gandhi's sayings without any critical understanding revealed their intellectual proximity to the Communists, who also followed borrowed theories and models without any critical input of their own.

Lohia claimed the heretical status for himself and his Socialist Party[5] as it was particularly these group of Gandhians who were making an attempt to interpret Gandhism beyond its accepted version and according to their contemporary realities and requirements and who were not afraid of highlighting "both pleasant and unpleasant facts"[6] about the Gandhian process despite their firm and resolute belief in the same. According to him, the heretical Gandhians must highlight the enduring elements of Gandhism instead of its ephemeral traits. While trying to reclaim Gandhism from the governmental and priestly Gandhians, Lohia reinterpreted several of Gandhi's thoughts, which suited his contemporary oppositional socialist politics. In the process, Lohia's criticisms did not even spare the Mahatma himself whenever the former thought the latter violated his own ideals, of which there were a number of examples. Lohia highlighted two particular incidents: the Bihar earthquake of 1934, whose cause Gandhi linked to the untouchability prevalent in India,[7] and Gandhi's opposition to the radicals within the Congress.[8] He specifically mentioned the case of Subhas Chandra Bose, who failed to garner support from Gandhi and had to leave the Congress. In doing so, he occasionally expressed many thoughts that appeared completely antithetical to Gandhi's own words. Lohia was well aware of this but called such reinterpretations as a heresy within the Gandhian

framework, which he deemed necessary for rejuvenating Gandhism as a revolutionary ideology.

In this article, I will engage with such reinterpretations of Gandhian thoughts by Lohia concerning three particular issues: the case for a decentralized economic and political system, the perpetual importance of *satyagraha,* even in a post-colonial state, and the caste system. I will begin with a discussion of Lohia's ideals about a decentralized economic system, which he thought would best suit the economic development of a capital-starved country like India. I will next engage with his ideas about *satyagraha,* which became the most well-known method of his political activities in post-independence oppositional politics. Finally, Lohia's anti-caste politics will be taken into account to mark his differences from Gandhi's and highlight the principal aim of his socialist politics, i.e., the establishment of an absolute equal society.

Decentralized Economic Production

In the aftermath of the first General Elections of 1952, the Socialists, dejected by their defeat, met at Pachmarhi to introspect their political and ideological line. In his presidential speech, Lohia asserted that socialism (and, by implication, the socialists themselves) was "torn between the worlds of capitalism and communism" and this prevented it from evolving "into a doctrine which would reconcile the claims of stability and of change, which would serve the needs of stability without strengthening the status quo, as well as the needs of change without fomenting chaos."[9] For him, socialism was not simply an economic or political model. It was the doctrine of a new age. He went on to distinguish between the economic and general aims of the prevalent socialist ideology. According to him, the economic aims of socialism consisted of a planned economy with the "establishment of social ownership over existing means of production, their further development and mass production."[10] On the other hand, the "preservation of national freedom, democracy, and human rights, and the securing of peace and of what are variously termed as the values of culture or the spiritual qualities of life" were considered its general aims. Lohia remarked that the economic aims of socialism were borrowed from communism while its general aims were more akin to those of the capitalist system. Most of the socialists believed that a simple "grafting of one on the other"[11] is the road to the establishment of a socialist society.

Lohia vehemently attacked this simplistic notion of borrowing from both capitalism and communism. He urged his socialist comrades to "disintegrate the premises on which capitalism and communism

are founded" and search for a unique way to arrange their "own harmony of economic and general aims."[12] Otherwise, socialism would remain "an illogical doctrine that refuses to come of age."[13]

While speaking about the evils of capitalism, Lohia emphasized the violence which accompanies capitalist development:

> Capitalism has ravaged the coloured peoples so much that they cannot now respond to its embrace, however affectionate. The task of capital formation over two-thirds of the world is far too colossal for private capital to accomplish. Capitalism cannot even fulfill its primary function of providing capital to mankind. The effort to spread the capitalist integration, which has hitherto been of local application among the white peoples, to all mankind and make it universal is foredoomed to failure. Poverty and war have been the monstrous progenies of capitalism, poverty for two-thirds of mankind and war for the rest, and it is powerless to destroy its own children.[14]

However, communism is no different as it "inherits from capitalism its *technique of production*" and it only "seeks to smash the capitalist *relations of production*." Moreover the communist class struggle is a "doctrine of deceit, lies, treason, tyranny, decay of culture, and also, of assistance to capitalism until a successful revolt takes place."[15]

Lohia summarized the promises of capitalism and communism using the metaphor of bread and freedom. While capitalism promises freedom, it cannot guarantee bread; on the other hand, in the communist system, while the availability of bread is somewhat certain, freedom remains an allusion. The solution is socialism— the integration of bread and freedom. And as socialism is an open and living ideology, it can accommodate several traits of Gandhian thought.

However, for Lohia, socialism did not mean a premodern, pre-industrialization utopian past. Unlike Gandhi, he was not against the machines or the machine age, which, he argued, had brought unprecedented material equality among the masses. He was indeed against the spiritual inequality that came as a by-product of the unprecedented material equality brought upon by modern machine-based civilization. Under the modern civilization, "the anxieties, tensions, and general emptiness arising out of the unstillable hunger for increasing output and living standards are becoming unbearable."[16] As a solution, he proposed the invention of small-unit machines run by electricity or oil. Lohia's solution, in this way, was antithetical to Nehru's way of ameliorating poverty through centrally planned heavy industrialization initiatives led by a highly trained technocratic elite.

The idea of small-unit machines dates back to at least 1942, when Lohia wrote one of his first theoretical treatises, *Economics After Marx.*

In the heavy industrialization process under the capitalist system—and the communist system, which is a mere imitation of the capitalist mode of production— a specialized managerial class supervised the operation of the big machines, which, in most cases, produce only those commodities which are most profitable to supply. He wrote in *Economics After Marx:*

> Science and mass production explore in any period a special bit of the territory of men's demands, this particular demand becomes most profitable to supply, and productive capacity in this sphere is unit technics and mass production.[17]

The production of particular goods in the large-unit technics "has made for a block-use of a science, not an all-round use."[18] The proposed small-unit machines, on the other hand, would make an all-round use of science. Lohia knew well that this would not be an easy task, but he was quite optimistic:

> This will require almost a new beginning in science, a kind of flexible small-unit technics. It cannot be achieved at once, nor does it today seem at all possible in spheres such as those of turbine and automobile manufacture. But an economy must steadily aim to realize flexible technics wherever possible. Only so can an economy hope to achieve real and undepressing (sic) expansion and an equal distribution of wealth and social understanding. Only so can an economy acquire of all-round application of science.[19]

Since 1942, Lohia propagated the small-unit machine as the basis of socialist economic production. Small-unit machines can also be seen as an antidote to workers' alienation from production. Under the small-machine-based socialist production system, no managerial class would be specialized in operating big machines. Every worker would be able to participate equally in the production process, thereby ending the superiority of a specific class and the centralized mass production-based economic system.

Lohia asserted that the future of the Indian economy must ensure a decent standard of living and not simply at an ever-increasing output. He believed, "decent living rather than prosperity is the keynote of the day."[20] In the later days, Lohia conceded that the Gandhian philosophy of simple living and its economy has failed to make any considerable appeal among the masses. Nonetheless, he maintained that it had been a revolutionary idea since it "goes against the prevailing taste and economy."[21] However, if Gandhism wants to be relevant as a governmental idea, it must evolve, and the heretical

Gandhians must highlight the enduring elements of Gandhism. They must pose these elements as a counter to the blind adoption of Euro-American technology by the governmental Gandhians. Lohia had no qualms against the adoption of the *charkha* as an enduring symbol of village sufficiency, given it is adequately modernized by using electric power or oil. He hoped "if an economic thinking could evolve, which did not deny the positive technology of the present age but added to it Gandhiji's amendment, though not the concrete imagery, Gandhism might become relevant also as government."[22]

Decentralized State and Governance

Lohia was apprehensive about the role of nation-states in the modern world order. He noted in 1955 that the nation-state foundation of the current world order is the principal reason behind the rising of bitter rivalries among the people.[23] A jingoist strong centralized state armed with the atom bomb is the ultimate dystopia in Lohia's imagination. However, he was equally aware that the abstract idea of a world government could become a concrete reality only when there was a change in the hearts and minds of the ordinary masses. Till then, for the oppressed masses of the world, the presence of state power is almost a physical need:

> "Everything else must take second place, even man and humanity. Without the state, India had been producing not men but mice and the humanity of the tallest of them was almost over an abstract cover for stinking individualism, either submissive or greedy. The people can afford to take no risks yet. They dare not play with their state. Peoples with longer experience of statehood have greater vigour and potential for all kinds of defence."[24]

Gandhi and Nehru have represented the two broad categories of modern Indian thinking on the state. The former strongly criticized the overwhelming power of the modern state and the violence associated with it. The latter, however, unambiguously supported it as the only effective way to usher the country into a true modern age.[25] Lohia was somewhere in between these two ideologues. He knew well the importance of the state in implementing important social policies, but he was always suspicious of its centripetal tendencies. His defense of the state was also in stark contrast with his socialist comrade Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) whose anti-statism took form from his interpretation of Gandhi's writings. The anti-statism of JP was, in a way, an intellectually comfortable position for the Marxist-turned-Gandhian, who found close links between the ideas of Marx and Gandhi in their anti-state pronouncements.[26] While JP

shunned *Raj niti* or institutional politics solely in favor of *Lok niti or* people's politics, Lohia gave equal importance to the statist power politics and the people's movements (on which more in the later part of this essay).

Lohia's solution was the adoption of a decentralized polity manifesting itself in a decentralized state. Lohia as well as many other socialists, thought that by implementing a two-pillared federal structure in post-independent India, the Constituent Assembly betrayed the Gandhian ideals of a decentralized state and imposed an overtly centralized Leviathan State. He, instead, proposed a four-pillar (*chaukhamba*) state with greater power to the lower strata of village panchayats and district administrations. On the upper tier, the four-pillar state of his plan did not stop with a central national-level supervisory government. True to his universal outlook, he added another tier of 'world government' over the national one.

Lohia thought of experimenting with this decentralized governance model to tackle the issues of separatism emerging in different parts of India, especially the Naga separatist movement in North-East India. According to him, the academic writing of history in India is plagued by the imperialist notion of dividing the Indian people into misleading and wrong categories of "Aryan, non-Aryan, Dravidians and Mongols (sic)."[27] Foreign nations like China are making most of these divisions through their propaganda and fuelling resentments among the inhabitants of *Urvasiam* (*Uttar Purba Simanta Anchal*— a neologism created by Lohia describing the North-East India and to counter the colonial nomenclature of North East Frontier Agency or NEFA) by highlighting their physical distinctness from the rest of India. In order to overcome this false propaganda, the Indian government must allow closer interactions between the people of the northeast and the rest of India. The interaction between the people of the north-east and the rest of India should be at the non-governmental level as far as possible— for example, between villages or city wards.

However, active statist-governmental intervention was sought in the lifestyle of the people of the north-east without which the area would remain a "dirty and stagnant pool, even dirtier and more stagnant than the rest of India." He proposed the granting of substantial amount of money for the spread of education and social reform. Proposals that suggested greater intervention in the tribal lifestyle included ending the Jhoom cultivation practice and forming a 'Food army' to bring large tracts of uncultivated land under agriculture. More controversial suggestions included changing habits in the sphere of personal hygiene, bathing habits, dressing sense, and use of cosmetics, etc. For example, he wanted to stop the piercing and

enlargement of the nostrils of the women of the *Apatani* tribe.[28] However, Lohia resented that the policies of the government of India were exactly the opposite. According to him, the government's non-interventionist policy regarding the tribal lifestyle was actually hurting them the most.

Curiously enough, Lohia's assertions of a historically close relationship between the tribes of the north-east and the people from the rest of India were, to a certain extent, based on a Hindu mythic past in which Rukmini, the consort of Lord Krishna, belonged to the Mismi tribe of the north-east. He resented that this close relationship has a foundation in the Hindu and Indian cultural past, which the modern Indian government could not comprehend, partly due to the influence of one Verrier Elwin.[29] Elwin, whom he described as an ex-padre, "who in conjunction with the prime minister has evolved a national park theory for the Assam tribal people, which more or less treat them like the Gir lions and isolates them even more from the outside world."[30] When Lohia was obstructed from entering the region in 1958, he wrote:

> Among many examples of the violation by the government of India of law and the constitution, is its policy completely separating the administration of the Urvasiam area (North-east Frontier Agency) from the rest of the country. This area ...is a prohibited area for the people of the rest of the Indian Union, where no Indian citizen can enter without obtaining a special permit from the Governor of Assam. How is this done when the constitution applies to the whole country.... In the name of protecting the culture of the Adivasis, the advisor to the Governor of Assam for Urvasiam affairs has been indulging in highly condemnable acts. The Governor's advisor has pursued a policy of segregating the residents of this area from the rest of the Indian people and of treating them as protected animals. Such polices are not only shameful and condemnable, but also barbarous.[31]

Elwin, on the other hand, was against any hasty plan of assimilation of the tribals residing in the hills of the north-east with the people from the plains. He was the proponent of a middle path regarding the interaction between the tribals of the north-east and the people from the rest of India, which he described as "neither isolation nor assimilation." He strongly protested against equating the NEFA region with tribal zoos or museums. In his own words, "to try to preserve and develop the best elements in tribal art, religion and culture is something very different from wishing to keep the people in a zoo." According to Ramachandra Guha, the philosophy of Elwin's tribal welfare can be summed up in the following phrase:

festina lente, "make haste slowly."[32]

While the final objective of the policies of both Lohia and Elwin were the same— national integration; they differed largely in the policy details and the pace on which the integrationist policies were to be implemented. It is, however, not surprising that such policy details would be of vital importance to an ideologue like Lohia, who considered both the means and the ends equally important.

The government of India's failure to smoothly integrate the tribals of the north-east with the rest of India was thus, according to Lohia, a result of the adoption of a series of faulty policies like the extension of unpopular laws like the Forest Act, which deprives the tribals of their inherent right to collect forest items, and incidents of violent shootings, inhuman tortures, and rapes of the members of different tribes to suppress sporadic rebel violence.[33] He concluded that once such wrongs are corrected, there remains no base for the demand of an independent Naga state:

> The Socialist Party is of the opinion that the Naga demand for independence is ill-conceived and to the detriment of Nagas themselves. This committee appeals to the Nagas to give up their demand for independence and to make common cause, as citizens of India, with other submerged and exploited sections of Indians in their peaceful struggle against injustice and for fulfilment of their legitimate political, economic and cultural aspirations.[34]

Lohia, while declining independent statehood to the Nagas, wanted them to participate in an elected district-level government within the Indian state "with powers over police and collection of taxes and with *guaranteed cultural safeguards*."[35] In order to achieve these political concessions, they must not indulge in violence, but non-violent civil disobedience is the path to be followed.

The Spectre of Civil Disobedience

While violent armed separatist struggles were vehemently opposed, Lohia has been regarded as one of the greatest exponents of non-violent movements. In the Pachmarhi speech, Lohia underlined some specific forms of action to achieve socialism— actively pursuing constructive action, participating in elections, and resisting injustice. These three modes of action were made famous by the slogan, "the spade, the vote, and the prison." He stated that all three are interrelated and "whatever mode of action powerfully influences the people's will, its effect is undoubtedly felt in the other spheres."[36]

Gandhi's influence is clearly visible in the programs of constructive action and the rhetoric of resistance to injustice. Lohia always

considered the non-violent mass civil disobedience movements as Gandhi's greatest contribution to revolutionary politics. In 1955, while inaugurating his separate Socialist Party, he claimed that it was Gandhi who, for the first time in history, had put the weapon of civil disobedience into the hands of the masses, which was earlier used by only great men like *Prahlad*,[37] Socrates or Henry David Thoreau.[38] K. Gopinath Pillai has shown that as early as 1939, Lohia enthusiastically wrote to Gandhi about his views on using satyagraha to redress socio-economic problems, especially the problems of peasants.[39] At that time, Gandhi— the conservative, however- promptly rejected the proposition of organizing peasant satyagrahas, for peasants were not adequately trained to pursue non-violent struggle. Even mild attempts from Lohia to convert Gandhian ideals into socialist actions were rebuffed. Madhu Limaye has suggested that Gandhi's rejection of socialist-led Kisan Sabha movements, whose ultimate aim was to abolish the zamindari system in north India, stemmed from his conservative class consciousness.[40]

The situation was quite different in the post-independence period without Gandhi's presence. Lohia, now free to interpret Gandhi's ideals and without the risk of being repudiated by the ideologue himself, attacked the Congress government. He indeed considered post-1947 India(and Pakistan as well) "a strict continuance of British India in most essential ways" for it had inherited and retained the British legacy in "all their ramifications, discipline and barbarism." [41] Thus, he strongly defended the right to organize *satyagrahas* even in independent India, for *satyagrahas* are— like class struggle— an "exercise in power, reduction of the power of evil and increase in the power of good."[42] As long as there will be injustice and oppression, there will be *satyagraha*. Other socialist leaders like Acharya Narendra Deva also shared the same position:

> "Gandhiji never meant to satyagraha to be used only against foreign domination. He advised its use even against economic exploitation and for the establishment of a classless socialist society."[43]

The socialists' idea of satyagraha in independent India was antithetical to Nehru's idea of satyagraha. Gyan Prakash has shown that Nehru's attitude towards street politics, agitations, people's movements, etc., was completely changed once he assumed state power. He thought that in a democratic setup, citizens should exercise their political will only through voting. The days of street fighting are over, and the greater part of the citizen's energy should be invested in the nation-building process in a disciplined manner.[44] In 1954, when

Lohia was incarcerated for organizing a civil disobedience movement against the increase in canal tax in Uttar Pradesh, he wrote a letter to Rajendra Prasad, the President of India. In this letter, he reflected on Nehru's attitude towards civil disobedience and his own justifications for its use in democratic, free India:

> Your First Minister has observed that the practice of civil disobedience in a free country is senseless. He may have specifically meant conditions of democracy and the adult vote… civil disobedience has a specific purpose alone in a free and democratic country. Under other conditions, the use of violent methods may not be altogether unavoidable and, in any case, its condemnation is not above debate. India's contribution in the present century is the idea under conditions of democracy of obligatory and unqualified condemnation of resort to violence.[45]

The socialist civil disobedience aiming at a more equal society must be based on non-violence because the use of violence and weapons inevitably leads to an unequal system.[46] Lohia's contention was that since constitutional means like elections often do little to ensure justice for the oppressed masses, they tend to resort to violence and weapons in order to get justice. In this way, an unequal system and a false binary of ballot and bullet persisted, whereas the real dichotomy is between civil disobedience and injustice. It is interesting to note that Lohia's purpose of pursuing non-violent civil disobedience was to achieve *justice* and *equality*; in Gandhi's case, it was *truth* alone.[47] It should also be noted that Lohia did not fully discount the idea of using violence during a critical moment in a revolution, "let it be noted that I am opposing the organising of violence: its use at a critical moment when the whole people are in revolt and government bayonets are themselves shaky is somewhat different."[48]

In the 1962 election manifesto of the Socialist Party, he declared satyagraha to be not only a "lasting but also a world principle."[49] Lohia was seriously interested in testing the effectiveness of satyagraha in societies other than India and in issues related to those foreign societies. One of his first acts of satyagraha in independent India was against the suppression of democratic forces in Nepal by the Nepalese monarchy in May 1949. He also peacefully protested against the segregation laws of the USA in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1964. The incident makes quite a furor in both India and the USA.[50]

Social Policies

A much greater contrast between Gandhi and Lohia can be seen in terms of social policies. According to the latter, India's huge population was one of the principal causes of its economic backwardness. Thus,

Lohia was actively in favor of providing birth control and sterilization facilities to couples who have produced three or more children. He was aware that it might cost the socialists their popularity for a brief moment. But he asserted that the socialists must be "brave enough to open a full-scale attack on social evils."[51] He also attacked and ridiculed the priestly Gandhians for holding "unholy notions on birth control."[52]

According to Lohia, the greatest obstacle to achieving equality in Indian society has been the existence of the caste system. Lohia's understanding of the caste system was wholesome, his attack on the caste system was unambiguous, and his solution to the evil of the caste system was quite radical. He included women, Sudras, Harijans, Adivasis, and the lower castes of Muslims in the category of the oppressed castes. According to Lohia's formulations, castes are immobile classes, and classes are immobile castes. Such social systems can be observed in many societies around the world. What makes the Indian case unique is the complete absence of social mobility for thousands of years. Lohia wondered the reasons behind the continuous dominance of the higher castes in India over the centuries. Why did the lower castes tolerate such a discriminating system— an illusion of inferiority about themselves? Why did they never rebel against such a pejorative system? Lohia gave a twofold answer.
On the one hand:

> They (the high-castes) cannot do it alone through the gun. They must instil a sense of inferiority into those whom they seek to govern and exploit. This they best can do by turning themselves into a select caste with speech, dress, manners and living of which the lower castes are incapable.[53]

On the other hand, the lower castes feel a sort of social insurance from the caste system. Since it is the single most overwhelming phenomenon of Indian life, the most personal and intimate rituals of one's life, like birth, marriage, and death are all associated with their caste identity. One cannot go beyond these identities and still expect a safety net against calamity or routine ill-being from society. In a way, the very existence of an Indian is dependent on their caste identity. There are also a number of myths and legends created in order to project their inferior status. In this way, the ideological subjection has made them, in most cases, active supporters of the status quo. It is, thus, very natural that castes are the determining force in politics, too. Most of the political parties, even the socialist parties, were led by high caste men. Lohia, who was a Baniya by caste, was well aware of this situation and extended his criticism to his own party as well for their failure to elevate enough lower caste politicians to leadership positions.

Lohia was aware that with the spread of English education, trade, and commerce, some traditionally lower castes had acquired higher status. But, their social mobility has failed to improve the situation for the majority of the lower castes. It has only replaced the Brahmins with a powerful *non-Dwija* caste. This kind of upward mobility has only strengthened the caste system. He discussed the cases of the Reddys of Andhra Pradesh and the Marathas of Maharashtra to illustrate his argument. The influence of the higher castes was such that the lower castes considered it their duty to obey the Dwijas quietly. In this way, a lifeless mass and a chicane elite have been created.

Much has been written about Gandhi's attitude towards the caste system. His ambiguous ideas about caste have baffled historians and generated heated debates.[54] Lohia himself was not very impressed with Gandhi's role in the fight against the caste system. He thought Gandhi acted as a reformer, not a revolutionary, against the system. He wrote in 1963 that Gandhi's idea about caste,

> "…started with some kind of a romantic idealisation about it. He tried to shear it of its evils as though the thing was not evil in itself. It was only sometime around the last great struggle for freedom, the open rebellion of 1942, that he recognized the inherent evil of the caste system."[55]

Lohia's antidote to the evils of the caste system was not limited to the simple mobilization of anti-Brahmin sentiments like Periyar. He also did not favor presenting an exclusive plan for the Harijans like Ambedkar.[56] He was talking about the regeneration of the entire nation, which is possible only when the nation is free of the caste system as a whole. In a truly casteless system, there will be no sectional elevations; there will be no blind imitations of higher caste rituals by the upwardly mobile lower castes, and there will be no caste-based antagonism. Lohia proposed a political programme of organizing *satyagrahas* demanding a sixty percent reservation of all leadership positions of the nation.[57] Lohia stressed the immediate implementation of the proposed reservation system irrespective of the merit of the individuals from the lower castes, as it is only natural that they would not be equal in merit to the upper castes who have enjoyed the privilege of their position for centuries. Lohia argued, "A true doctrine of equal opportunity would have to undo the work of five thousand years by giving preferential treatment to the lower-castes over a period of at least a few decades."[58] The upper castes must endure a temporary injustice so that a "...new era of justice and equality may begin."[59] A similar formula of reserving sixty percent of posts for the depressed groups was followed within the Socialist Party. However, it must be

remembered that Lohia never advocated reservation as the sole weapon to fight against the caste system. He vigorously advocated inter-caste marriages and inter-dining ceremonies.

Lohia's advocacy for reservation has become the dominant identity of his political legacy to the later generation of scholars. Thus, when Akshaya Mukul wrote a fitting tribute to Lohia in his birth centenary year, he titled his piece "Rammanohar Lohia: The Quota Marshall."[60] However, Lohia did not propose a blanket reservation of seats for the lower castes in all spheres of public life. For example, he was strictly against reserving seats in the educational sector, as the Backward Castes Commission proposed. He urged the backward castes to ask the government to open more schools and colleges or conduct more than one shift in the same school to accommodate more students from their castes, but they may "never ask for the exclusion of any child of India from the portals of an educational institution."[61]

Conclusion

Rammanohar Lohia's greatest politico-intellectual achievement seems to be the invention of a revolutionary Gandhism. He was well aware of Gandhi's disavowal of any sort of class struggle or socialist rhetoric. As long as Gandhi was alive, Lohia's attempts to reinterpret his ideas met with strong resistance. Once martyred, Gandhi became the father of the nation, and he became free to claim his inheritance according to his ideological convictions.

Lohia's attempts to create a heretical strand within Gandhism met with partial success during his own lifetime. He organized a number of *satyagrahas* in different parts of the country (and even outside it), protesting against various evils. Although he was not immediately successful in reaping the benefits of such *satyagrahas* in the electoral politics against the Congress, it somehow forged his image as the most militant oppositional, yet democratic, socialist leader during the first two decades of Indian independence.

Lohia died in October 1967. It is interesting to note that the trajectory of his own ideals resembles Gandhi's. The followers of Lohia, who assumed power in several north Indian states, became well known for their caste-based reservation politics. But this lot of 'Governmental or *sarkari* Lohiaites' ignored the multiple aspects of marginality prevalent in the Indian society, which Lohia took great pains to highlight. Then there is another category of 'priestly' followers of Lohia who are never ready to see beyond him and fail to improvise according to the present realities.[62]

Lohia's prophecy about the survival of either the Atomic bomb or Gandhism proved to be untrue. The invocation of both Gandhi and

the Bomb continues in the 21st century in different contexts all over the world.[63] And it is probably the irony of history that it was a socialist of Lohiaite colors— George Fernandes, who as the Defence Minister of India, actively supervised the Pokhran II nuclear tests in 1998. In this general context of nuclear proliferation and the advent of the neo-liberal economic system in India from the 1990s, the possibility of the emergence of a heretical variety of Lohia's thoughts is not out of question.[64] However, a discussion of such possibilities remains outside the purview of this essay.

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34. Socialist Party's National Committee, March 2-4, 1956; *CWRL*, Vol 4, p.94
35. *ibid*., emphasis mine
36. Lohia, 'The Doctrinal Foundation of Socialism,' "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism," *CWRL,* Vol 1, p.517
37. *Prahlad* was a Hindu mythical character. Although Lohia was an atheist in personal life, he used to interpret Indian mythological characters through the lens of modern political categories. He had analyzed mythical characters like *Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Draupadi, Savitri*, etc. in the same manner.
38. Lohia, 'A New Chapter,' "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism," *CWRL,* Vol

1, p.604. Thoreau's writings on civil disobedience had been an influence on both Gandhi and Lohia. However, Lohia gave greater credit to Gandhi as he used civil disobedience in mass movements. It has been pointed out by Sudipta Kaviraj that by forming the modern collective of political mass movement, Gandhi was, in effect, giving a "fundamental concession to political modernity." And thus, Gandhi's resistance to the enormous power of the modern state could only be realized through the formation of another modern collective agency. Kaviraj, "On the enchantment of the state," pp.263-296

39. K. Gopinath Pillai, *Political Philosophy of Rammanohar Lohia: Alternative Development Perceptions* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1994), pp.81-82
40. Madhu Limaye, *Galaxy of the Indian Socialist Leaders* (New Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 2000), p.184
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43. Acharya Narendra Deva, "Transition to Socialism," *Towards Socialist Society,* ed. Brahmanand (New Delhi: Centre of Applied Politics, 1979), p.294. This was delivered as the Presidential Address at National Conference of PSP, Gaya, December 1955.
44. Gyan Prakash, *Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point* (Gurgaon: Penguin Random House, 2018), pp.77-78
45. Letter from Rammanohar Lohia to the President of India, Naini Central Jail, Undated, Correspondence with Lohia, Rammanohar, Correspondence File, Prem Bhasin Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (henceforward NMML)
46. Lohia, Preface to "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism," *CWRL,* Vol 1, p.148
47. Lohia had a somewhat subjective view about the nature of Truth. According to him, "All truth is discovered form the aspect or the angle which the seeker or the knower adopts." *ibid*., p.119
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50. Harris Wofford, "Lohia and America Meet," *CWRL,* Vol 2, pp.553-558; a collection of contemporary newspaper reports. See also, Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), p.240
51. Lohia, 'The Doctrinal Foundation of Socialism,' "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism," *CWRL,* Vol 1, p.522
52. Lohia, 'The Two Segregations of Caste and Sex,' "The Caste System," *CWRL,* Vol 2, p.205

53. Lohia, 'Towards the Destruction of Castes and Classes,' "The Caste System," *ibid.*, Vol 2, p.280
54. For further details, see Niskikant Kolge, *Gandhi Against Caste* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017)
55. Lohia, "Guilty Men of India's Partition," *CWRL,* Vol 2, p.93
56. Lohia admired Ambedkar's learning, integrity and courage but was critical of Ambedkar's exclusive focus on the Harijans, whereas he had the abilities to be a national leader and his explicit support for the Atlantic camp in the world affairs. Letter from Rammanohar Lohia to Madhu Limaye, July 1, 1957, included in "The Caste System," *CWRL,* Vol 2, p.233
57. In retrospect, the demand of reservation for the lower castes appears as the only lasting legacy of Lohia. He has been mocked, attacked, and caricatured for his reservation politics. But a critical reading of Lohia's writings revealed that he was acutely aware of the disadvantages of the reservation system which he termed as 'poisons'. He prescribed a number of precautions which may work as antidotes for the poisons of the reservation system. How some of the followers of Lohia politically thrived on the poison of the reservation system in the subsequent period is a different story and beyond the scope of the present work. Lohia, 'Towards the Destruction of Caste and Classes,' *ibid.*, pp.299-300
58. Lohia, *ibid.*, p.293
59. Lohia, 'Endure Temporary Injustice,' *ibid.*, p.223
60. Akshaya Mukul, "Rammanohar Lohia: The Quota Marshall," *The Times of India,* April 3, 2010, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Ram-Manohar-Lohia-The-Quota-Marshall/articleshow/5756713.cms Accessed on September 5, 2020
61. Lohia, 'Towards the destruction,' "The Caste System," *CWRL,* Vol 2, p.300
62. Yogendra Yadav, "What is living and What is dead in Rammanohar Lohia?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45, 40(October 2-8, 2010), p.92
63. Even Lohia himself was not averse to the idea of India acquiring the Bomb in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War if it is deemed necessary for the territorial integrity of India. Lohia, Preface to "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism," *CWRL,* Vol 1, p.159
64. For eg., Amit Basole and Sunil have demonstrated the perennial importance of Lohia's critique of capitalism which has become more relevant in this neo-liberal times. See, Amit Basole, "The Technology Question in Lohia," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45, 44/45 (October 30-November 12, 2010), pp.106-111; and Sunil, "Understanding Capitalism Through Lohia," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45, 40(October 2-8, 2010), pp.56-63

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Environmental Insecurity and Socio-Political Instability in Kashmir: A Gandhian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to understand how Gandhian principles on the environment may prove useful in examining the interlinkages between environmental crises and sociopolitical instabilities. It will utilise a study of Kashmir to explicate how environmental degradation has contributed to disruptions in life and livelihood, exacerbated by inequalities in resource distribution and a rapidly growing population. These risk constellations act as force multipliers intensifying social and political insecurity, especially where communities are disenchanted with the government or where hostile forces intervene. It will examine these issues through a Gandhian perspective of deleterious industrialisation and urbanisation, a metabolic rift between humans and nature, inequality, overconsumption, overaccumulation, and violence. It will suggest that policy solutions to these issues may be found through the notions of sarvodaya, advaita, ahimsa, self-reliance, trusteeship, need-based consumption, and sustainable development facilitated by a decentralised oceanic governance model at every level.

Key words: *Kashmir, environmental degradation, indigenous peoples, conflict, peace*

Introduction

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI'S contributions to political thought are multifaceted. Academic literature has considered his significant philosophical and practical impacts on the Indian movement for independence as offering perspectives starkly different from those of his contemporaries through the values of *ahimsa*, *satya*,

sarvodaya, and *satyagraha* he enunciated in the "moment of manoeuvre"[1]. Gandhi's influence extends to religious and spiritual realms, shaping contemporary religio-spiritual communities. His approach to conflict prevention, management, and resolution, as well as peacebuilding, holds relevance in international and domestic milieus. In today's context of environmental degradation and climate change, the relevance of a philosopher's ideology hinges on his/her consideration of these issues. While not a modern environmentalist, Gandhi integrated ecological sensibilities into his ethics and politics. His early recognition of extreme weather events, critique of waste production, and advocacy for vegetarianism foreshadowed aspects of contemporary ecological movements.

This article delves into Gandhi's ecological insights, not as isolated topics but as tools to comprehend the origins and persistence of violent conflicts. It scrutinises the environmental challenges in Kashmir, where insecurity and conflict can be traced back to issues like resource overutilisation, unequal distribution, and disparate economic development. The Gandhian perspective serves not only as a framework for peaceful conflict resolution but also as a lens to grasp the underlying causes of these conflicts. The article contends that despite progress in striving for Gandhian conflict resolution, success remains elusive due to overlooking the environmental dimension of Gandhi's philosophy in previous analyses. It seeks to bridge that gap by exploring how Gandhi's environmental musings are intimately intertwined with potential pathways to resolving these volatile conflicts.

Gandhi and Ecology

Gandhi's ecological perspective, often regarded as "deeper than deep ecology"[2], merits attention. Though he never explicitly initiated environmental movements or used the term 'ecology,' his viewpoint transcends the limited environmental awareness of his time. Ramachandra Guha suggests Gandhi's influence as an "early environmentalist" significantly shaped the Indian environmental movement. Environmental activists, from Chipko to Narmada Bachao Andolan, adopted Gandhian non-violent protest methods inspired by his critiques of industrialisation. While evidence in *Hind Swaraj* supporting this view is scarce, scattered hints of an alternative path in Gandhi's writings from the 1920s to 1940s deserve exploration[3]. Gandhi's concerns about India emulating Western industrialisation were not solely moral, but also held ecological implications. He warned against adopting the exploitative Western model, foreseeing the global depletion of resources if a nation the size of India were to follow suit

[4]. Gandhi advocated for village-centric economic development, decentralising power to empower local communities and alleviate the bias towards urban-industrial interests [5]. His vision for an ideal Indian village, emphasising sustainability, self-sufficiency, cleanliness, education, and religious institutions, aligns with modern environmental ideals [6]. He championed organic manure as an eco-friendly alternative to modern chemical techniques, highlighting the importance of soil fertility [7]. His ethos of voluntary simplicity and the belief that the world provides for need, not greed, exemplify an environmentally conscious lifestyle [8]. His insights into economic processes, rural development, and sustainable living remain pertinent in today's environmental context. Within the Indian environmental movement, the "Crusading Gandhian" strand employs religious rhetoric to advocate for pre-capitalist village communities as ecological and social models. They challenge dominant modernist ideologies by embracing traditional cultural expressions, offering an alternative, non-modern philosophy rooted in Indian tradition[9].

Guha underscores J.C. Kumarappa, a notable disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, as a pivotal figure in early Gandhian environmentalism[10]. Kumarappa's advocacy for integrating agriculture with its natural environment laid the foundation for an ecological approach aligned with Gandhian ideals. He emphasised localised production for effective supervision and ecological accountability, critiquing industrialisation for inherent exploitation. Advocating agriculture as the primary occupation, he viewed it as humanity's way to optimise results through nature. Kumarappa consistently promoted prudent resource management in agrarian economies. He championed the use of night soil as fertiliser and converting human waste and village refuse into organic resources. He also stressed the importance of combatting erosion and waterlogging to safeguard soil quality and criticised the inadequate maintenance of irrigation tanks during British rule, advocating for water conservation against brackishness. He underscored forest management based on local community needs, not just revenue considerations. He foresaw potential biomass shortages in rural economies, expressing concern about fodder availability and critiqued the colonial government's reluctance to allow free grazing on waste land. Soil preservation, water conservation, recycling, village forest rights, and biomass management persist as enduring rural environmental challenges. Guha also acknowledges Mira Behn (Madeline Slade) as a Gandhian pioneer in environmental thinking[11]. She devoted years to rural reconstruction, applying her mentor's principles. In 1945, she established an *ashram* near Rishikesh, shedding light on critical links between Himalayan deforestation, soil

erosion, and floods long before the Chipko movement gained momentum. She identified flaws in forest management, emphasising villager involvement and cautioning against substituting oak with less water-retentive pine. In rural north India, she observed enduring environmental issues in Indian agriculture, including pervasive waterlogging, inappropriate pasture-to-plough conversions impacting livestock quality, and rampant soil erosion. She noted the swift ecological disruptions in modern life, aligning with Gandhi and Kumarappa in her primary focus on revitalising India's village economy.

Gandhi's "economy of permanence" model[12], rooted in biomass-based production, contrasts sharply with the Nehruvian Model's industrial focus. While Gandhi's approach is adaptable and sustainable, Nehruvian Model requires safeguarding natural capital from man-made encroachment. India must pivot towards a bio-industrial paradigm, prioritising ecological principles' impact on environment and human well-being, aligning ecology and economy. This presents both challenge and opportunity for India's trajectory. Shifting from Kumarappa's "economy of permanence" to "economic ecology" is, thus, crucial[13]. Gandhi's environmental ethos emerges from his statements, writings, and lifestyle. It includes left-of-center social democracy, empowering marginalised groups, linking environmentalism to essential social, economic, and ethical tenets, advocating nonviolence, and assuming responsibility for shaping the nation's future. His lifestyle embodies sustainability—modest, austere, need-based, and harmonious with the environment. His basic education philosophy emphasises deep understanding of environment, resource availability, self-reliance, and productive crafts. Gandhi valued manual labour over machinery, recognising deforestation's impact on natural rhythms and rainfall patterns. Frugality, in line with ecological values, was central to his vision. For *swaraj* to thrive, a community fostering growth through relationships is vital, recognising profound social interdependence and ecological symbiosis. This prompts a reconsideration of *swaraj*, offering solutions to local climate impacts, emphasising bioregionalism, and advocating for local economies, land, water, food, energy, and livelihood security. It calls for renewed urban-rural relations, emphasising agriculture, reviving indigenous knowledge, and grassroots democracy in governance[14].

Influenced by Gandhi's teachings, Arne Naess found parallels between deep ecology and Gandhi's ideology. He adopted Gandhi's belief in the essential unity of all life, emphasising human interconnectedness. Naess' distinction between "shallow" and "deep" environmental approaches in the early 1970s gave rise to the deep

ecology movement. Shallow environmentalists, concerned with human interests, advocate for "sustainable development" and technological solutions. Deep ecology delves into profound questions, rejecting the human-in-environment perspective for a relational, holistic field view. It prioritises the intrinsic value of all life forms and quality of life over material standards[15]. Advocating for population reduction and policy shifts in economics, technology, and ideology, it has faced criticism for potential patriarchal undertones and overlooking social inequities in the Third World. Critics, especially from ecofeminism, argue that it inadequately addresses women's oppression, despite recognising the exploitation of both nature and humans. They call for a broader political perspective in deep ecology. Still, Naess' deep ecology resonates with environmentalists for its alignment with principles of nonviolence, vegetarianism, and interconnectedness[16].

Conceptualising Gandhian Environmental Ethics and Conflict

Gandhi's pivotal role in Indian environmentalism can be contextualised through the distinction between "full-belly" and "empty-belly" environmentalism. The former, prevalent in affluent societies, centres on preserving untouched wilderness, while the latter addresses environmental concerns directly impacting survival and ways of life[17]. India's environmental landscape, however, is intricate, encompassing movements from urban middle-class advocates to impoverished rural communities. Unfortunately, the latter, which stress equity and resource allocation, are sometimes sidelined in broader environmental discussions[18]. This perspective neglects the ecological hurdles faced by marginalised communities, like access to clean water and sanitation, rendering conventional concepts of nature or wilderness irrelevant[19]. To fully grasp Gandhi's pioneering role in Indian environmentalism, expanding the definition of environmentalism to encompass agrarian reform and social justice, concepts intrinsically linked to his social philosophy is imperative. This alignment underscores contemporary sustainability concerns[20]. Understanding Gandhi's contributions to environmental ethics requires an exploration of his core ideology, or "the inner logic" of Gandhian ecology, which include: (i) *satya*, or truth, pursued through spiritual practice, moral actions, and service to others; (ii) *ahimsa*, emphasising nonviolence as the sole means for achieving truthful ends, involving active compassion and selfless service; (iii) *tapas* (self-purification) seen as essential for nonviolence as identification with everything that lives hinges on it; and (iv) *swaraj* (self-rule)[21]. His familial and philosophical background shapes these principles, and his environmental ethics are anchored in a theocentric framework, which aligns with the Vaishnava Vedanta (especially the

non-duality of the *Gaudiya* tradition), Jainism, Buddhism, and India's epic and religious literature[22]. It envisions a spiritual connection with all living beings and asserts their common divine origin[23]. Gandhi's ecological philosophy challenges the Western compartmentalisation of life, integrating economics, politics, and social theory. This interdisciplinary approach also aligns with the principles of human ecology. Gandhi advocated for the sanctity of all life forms and harmony with nature, echoing the sentiments of thinkers like Tagore, Ruskin, and Thoreau[24]. Gandhi championed a cosmocentric perspective, rejecting anthropocentrism, restoring a balanced relationship between humanity and the natural world. He viewed the Earth as a living organism, guided by cosmic and species laws, advocating for nonviolence towards all diversity[25]. This philosophy underscores his profound environmental awareness, emphasising the intrinsic unity and universal dependence of all life forms and creation. Gandhi embodied the principles of an "ecological yogi", though he never explicitly identified as one. Yoga, involving discipline of body and mind, encompasses physical practices (*hat yoga*) and ethical conduct (*raj yoga*). The first two disciplines, *yamas* and *niyamas*, touch upon environmental ethics and resource use, aspects Gandhi lived and promoted. *Yamas* include nonviolence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), ethical resource use (*asteya*), population regulation through celibacy (*brahmacharya*), and avoidance of excess wealth (*aparigraha*). *Niyamas* are self-imposed conduct codes, including cleanliness (*shaucha*), contentment (*santosh*), austerity (*tapas*), self-reflection (*swadhyaya*), and prayer and meditation (*ishwar pranidhan*). His reverence for all life forms underpinned his commitment to biodiversity. He asserted that humans lacked the right to create life, and thus, should not destroy it. He believed nonviolence should be a cultural cornerstone, from individuals to society and government. Gandhi's entire life serves as an ecological treatise. Through simple living, nonviolence, truthfulness, and celibacy, Gandhi translated ecological principles into tangible action[26].

Thus, the philosophical basis for Gandhian environmental ethics was his belief in the logic of the *advaita* or the unity of all life. The *Advaita Vedanta* in the Hindu philosophical tradition is based on three notions that permit concerns vital to ecological conservation. It includes the concept of *karma* – which enunciates how humanity is intermeshed with all other components of the cosmos; the concept of *Brahman* – a sublimated union of all things, demonstrating that essentially all life is one and everything is Real and Ideal; and the logical corollary of these two emanations of creation – every element of nature has innate spiritual value. Every component of the natural

environment – all flora and fauna, including humanity – is worthy of reverence because they are all elements of divinity incarnated in different forms[27]. This also entails, therefore, that humankind has a responsibility toward the conservation and protection of nature because they belong to the same unity, because violence against nature through degradation, exploitation, and pollution amounts to violence against the self. All life is intrinsically valuable and sacred simply because it belongs to an eternal union of which every individual is a part. The primordiality of the man-nature relationship is crucial in Gandhian political and social thought. It allows an understanding of how anthropogenic corrosion of natural resources is unethical and how the innate interconnection between humans and nature is crucial to the former's spiritual well-being.

This is an important intervening variable in the relationship between environmental degradation and conflict. This also brings the Gandhian philosophy of sublimated unity proximate to Karl Marx's conception of an "irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism"[28]. Gandhi and Marx, while distinct in their visions, share some underlying similarities in their perspectives on social conflict and exploitation. Both acknowledge the existence of social conflict, though Gandhi's analysis goes beyond Marx's by recognising conflicts between village and city in addition to more traditional class struggles. Both also emphasise the need to tap into the innate strengths of individuals to end exploitation, with Gandhi advocating non-cooperation and passive resistance as tools to cultivate the idea of "trusteeship" among owners of land and capital. While Marx advocates for collective action by the proletariat, Gandhi focuses on empowering the exploited to resist exploitation. Despite these similarities, they diverge significantly in their ultimate societal ideals. Marx envisions a transition to socialism through proletarian revolution and collective ownership of capital, while Gandhi advocates for a society where private property persists as long as the owner directly uses it. Gandhi's vision focuses on self-sufficiency and decentralised production, and he suggests that industries producing capital goods could be nationalised. Gandhi moves from the theory of passive resistance to access the ideal of trusteeship, just as Marx moves from the theory of class conflict and revolution to achieve the ideal of socialism. While Gandhi's philosophy may seem idealistic, it is rooted in the operational, "strongest forces" of human nature, making it a realistic alternative to Marx's "highest forces" for addressing social conflict.[29]

Thus, while Gandhi and Marx differ on several fundamental adjudications – primarily regarding violence and its role in social transformation – the theory of the "metabolic rift," reformulated

indicates a deeper philosophical similarity between their perspectives. According to Marx, individuals as forces of nature, composed of nature, utilise their limbs to extract from nature through labour, and return to nature whatever is consumed. This is the natural and original relationship between humanity and the natural environment, which is essential to peaceful social metabolism. As long as individuals remain tied to their natural preconditions, exploitation is precluded because the exploitation of nature by the individual would necessitate the impossible exploitation of the self by the self. Only when this interconnection is broken by capitalistic urban and industrial expansion will vulnerabilities to conflict and instability appear. Gandhi would agree with this formulation. For both Marx and Gandhi therefore, the severance of the individual from nature, and the extraction of natural products devoid of their restoration to the natural world due to the phenomenon of urbanity and mechanised industries, is responsible for the simmerings of instabilities. However, one views this union of individuals and nature – from Marx's scientific perspective of metabolic processes or Gandhi's spiritual perspective of *Vedantic* oneness – it is evident that a rift in this association would signal substantial psychical and psychological distress. If the artificiality of civilisation compels individuals into uncoupling from nature, the resultant psycho-spiritual and socioeconomic insecurities will ensure that conflicts originate and persist until the rift is resolved. Therefore, essential to the environmental interrogation of conflicts is the Gandhian critique of industrialisation and urbanisation – much of which is sympathetic to the Marxist critique of the same.

The relationship between environmental degradation and conflict has been explored by several authors, with some prominent perspectives emerging. Thomas Homer-Dixon[30] explores how environmental scarcity, including degradation, population growth, and resource inequality, fuels prolonged conflicts in the developing world. He identifies key scarcities like land degradation, deforestation, water scarcity, and fisheries depletion that lead to economic hardship, social tension, and violence. Environmental scarcities are already triggering conflicts in the developing world, often sub-national and persistent, with potential to intensify due to increasing scarcity. Vulnerable ecosystems exacerbate scarcity independently, driving disparities in resource distribution. Potential consequences of environmentally induced conflict on international security include country fragmentation, mass migrations, challenges in international agreements, increased authoritarianism, and disruptions to security. Homer-Dixon outlines the sources and consequences of environmental scarcity, presenting hypotheses that range from simple-scarcity

conflicts between states to group-identity conflicts, ethnic clashes, and deprivation conflicts like civil strife and insurgency. Günther Baechler[31] notes that unchecked degradation of renewable resources, particularly in developing societies, sparks violent conflicts in regions facing socioeconomic crises. Sociopolitical factors play crucial roles, including the absence of robust conflict resolution institutions, leaders' willingness to address grievances and misperceptions about alternatives to violence. Baechler proposes three hypotheses explaining environmentally induced violence: conflicts arise in crisis areas driven by power struggles; regulatory gaps and exploitation fuel violence; and environmental concerns act as catalysts, with sudden events shifting actors from non-violent to violent means. The capability and limitations of involved actors, access to weapons, and potential gains through violence shape outcomes. Regulatory deficiencies in conflict resolution methods and weak governance exacerbate the situation in regions with developmental challenges.

Gandhi was also convinced that environmental degradation and conflict resulted from two sets of phenomena (Figure 1).

From the socioeconomic perspective, they were a consequence of certain incessant risk constellations – unimpeded urbanisation necessitating the plunder of the natural environment, unchecked industrialisation facilitating a disequilibrium in natural inputs and reimbursements, and profit accumulation motivations of capitalist socioeconomic systems. He was determined that Indian life belonged to the villages, an existence irredeemably corrupted by the advent of Western civilisation and its accompanying advances in technology, machinery, and industry. He asserted that though small industries possessed and conducted by indigenous populations were beneficial to ordered progress because of their retained intimacy with nature, centralised mass production was ruinous because it allowed the exploitation of the weak by the strong – of developing nations by those developed, of workers by the industrialists. He believed that the capacity of the rich to exploit the poor and extract from nature, reducing both to slavish, depleted actualities was the core of industrialism and that if India imitated these traditions of the West, it too would be guilty of these transgressions. He contended that industrialisation enforces the substitution of human labour with machines, producing unemployment, disinheritance, destitution, and hunger. This is exacerbated by the inequalities in the distribution of production and resources, leading to anxieties accompanying relative deprivation and the development of fraud and speculation. Gandhi repudiated convictions of the apparent benefits of raised standards of living accompanying industrialisation, with affirmations that equal

and equitable progress is impossible without the concurrent distribution of both production and consumption equally, on a mass scale – an impossibility under industrialisation. He believed, for instance, that the mechanisation accompanying the mill industries had displaced thousands of workers and rendered them unemployable, and his *Swadeshi* program accentuated the protection and promotion of village cottage industries (especially *khadi* woven by hand and *charkha*)[32].

From the spiritual-ethical perspective, industrialism controlled by the elite not only alienates the self, but also alienates individuals from nature. These alienations also foster and are perhaps predicated upon human exploitation of nature as the man-nature unity is dismantled. Indeed, individuals are only able to inflict violence upon nature because the forces of industrialisation have disrupted their connection with nature. Urbanisation and mechanisation precipitate an irreparable physical and psychological dichotomy between urban and rural societies founded upon the latter's exploitation by the former, draining from the rurality, agency, and autonomy. As individuals are uprooted from their traditional rural habitations and occupations and compelled to work intermittently in others' fields and factories or in mechanised services in cities, they are denigrated to passive organisms subjugated to technology and divorced from their inherited subjective realities, incapable of nourishment and development of either the mind or the body. Because humanity and nature are a complex unity, the alienation of the self from itself and nature, engenders the alienation of nature from itself as well. Ecology is reduced to a passive recipient of accumulative extraction, as an artefact to be conquered, utilised, and exploited beyond recognition. Industrialisation and urbanisation thus, amputate individuals from nature and natural processes, destroy the primordial relationship between them, throw them vulnerable to global exploitation, and accelerate associated insecurities that could foment environmental and sociopolitical instability[33].

Why Kashmir?

Gandhi's stance on the Kashmir issue and his role in the last months of his life regarding this matter have been relatively understated in historical discussions. His connection with Kashmir dates back to 1915, though various circumstances prevented him from visiting the region until 1947. In 1938, an invitation from Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, the Prime Minister of the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, had almost led Gandhi to visit Srinagar. However, circumstances intervened, delaying his visit until 1947, just days before India's independence. Originally, Jawaharlal Nehru had been slated to visit

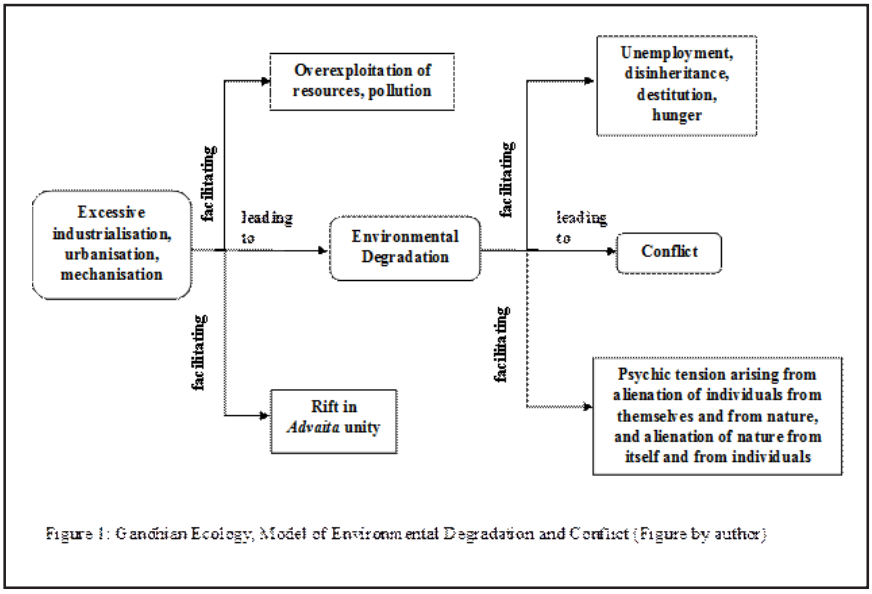

Figure 1: Gandhian Ecology, Model of Environmental Degradation and Conflict (Figure by author)

Kashmir to assure the people there that the Congress was not neglecting them. But due to his impending role as India's first Prime Minister and the unresolved political future of Kashmir, Gandhi made the trip instead[34]. In what is a genuine statement of Gandhi's belief in sarvodaya and oceanic, non-hierarchical social order, he firmly believed that "the real sovereign of the State are the people of the State. If the ruler is not a servant of the people, then he is not the ruler… The ruler is nothing. The people are everything. The ruler will be dead one of these days, but the people will remain".[35] He refrained from influencing the Maharaja's decision on accession to India or Pakistan, emphasising that the people of Kashmir should have the final say. He highlighted the importance of leaving the people of Kashmir free to decide their future without coercion. When the tribal invasion of Kashmir occurred in late October 1947, Gandhi reiterated his principle that no one should be forced into anything, irrespective of the situation. He firmly believed in the people's right to decide the fate of Kashmir and emphasised that they should not be compelled while being attacked and coerced. Gandhi's perspective was that Kashmir, with its diverse population could offer a solution to the religious divide in the subcontinent. He believed that after repelling the tribal invaders, Kashmir should belong to its people. He said, "All that would happen would be that Kashmir would belong to the Kashmiris. After all, Kashmir cannot be saved by the Maharaja. If anyone can save Kashmir, it is only the Muslims, the Kashmiri Pandits, the Rajputs and the Sikhs who can do so."[36] When the Indian government referred the Kashmir

issue to the United Nations in 1947, Gandhi expressed a preference for India and Pakistan to settle the matter without foreign intervention. He believed that a fair solution could only be achieved if both nations were genuinely interested in finding a resolution. Tragically, the Kashmir issue became intertwined with the events leading to Gandhi's assassination. A financial dispute arose between India and Pakistan, involving a payment of Rs. 550 million, which became entangled with the Kashmir conflict. Sardar Patel insisted on linking the payment to the withdrawal of troops from Kashmir, a position Gandhi opposed. This led Gandhi to embark on an indefinite fast, seen by many as a protest against Patel's stance. Mountbatten and Nehru urged Gandhi to intervene, emphasising India's moral obligation to transfer the funds to Pakistan. Ultimately, Patel yielded, and Gandhi ended his fast at the behest of community leaders. Unfortunately, Gandhi's unwavering support for Muslims, epitomised by his final pro-Muslim fast, was cited by his assailant, Godse, as the main motive for the act that ended Gandhi's life. In hindsight, the Gandhian approach advocated peaceful resolution and respect for the will of the Kashmiri people. This perspective remains relevant today, and the Gandhi Peace Foundation issued a statement concerning the ongoing situation in Kashmir. The Foundation criticised the prolonged lockdown, the disappearance of the State from India's map, and the absence of a democratic dialogue in resolving the crisis. It emphasised the importance of supporting the Kashmiri people and allowing free expression while maintaining law and order to normalise the situation[37]. Considering Gandhi's legacy and his principles of *ahimsa* and *sarvodaya*, his views on Kashmir gain significance not only because peace in Kashmir was a paramount concern for him but also because, in his limited remarks on Kashmir, he seemed to stress the interconnectedness of grassroots sovereignty and conflict resolution. These perspectives underscore the importance of linking these views on Kashmir with his broader ecological outlook.

These conceptualisations become discernible in environmental degradation, industrialisation, and instability in Kashmir. If viewed from a Gandhian perspective, these instabilities seem to be an outcome of a deep rift in the conception of the self, facilitated by industrialisation and urbanisation and their deleterious effects on the region's ecology. Excessive industrialisation and extraction of natural resources have led to the depletion of biospherical reserves, displacement, and unemployment. They have also corrupted man-nature ties, engendering psychical distress. These socioeconomic and spiritual factors cause and intensify conflict.

A range of environmental challenges, notably the repercussions of unchecked industrialisation and urbanisation, are evident in the

region. These include forest degradation, river and wetland damage, and loss of biodiversity, resulting in reduced water availability and landslides due to reservoir sedimentation. Such issues stem from deforestation, pollution, overgrazing, and habitat destruction. Infrastructural development, industrial projects, illegal mining, and chemical runoff have led to escalating air, water, and soil contamination, as well as land conversion and diminished soil health[38]. Notably, the unrestrained expansion of Srinagar city poses a grave threat to neighbouring wetlands, affecting interconnected ecosystems. Dal Lake and Nagin Lake face similar challenges from pollution. With the recent changes in land laws, predicting the potential damage to forest resources and saffron harvests is difficult due to timber smuggling and cement industry expansion. In Parampore, cement factories have polluted saffron fields, reducing crop yield. Concerns arise about the impact on local resources and food security with the construction of large-scale industries, brick kilns, and crushing units, despite assurances from the Lieutenant Governor. Similarly, in Khrew, the operation of cement factories has led to air pollution, impacting crops and causing respiratory issues for residents. In Lalgund Panzan, riverbed mining has polluted water used for consumption and irrigation, affecting apple and paddy fields. The practice has also led to extortion by a mining mafia, compounding the challenges faced by nearby villagers. Additionally, Botpora-Budgam accommodates numerous brick kilns operating without environmental clearance, leading to agricultural degradation, respiratory issues, and soil erosion. The Hokersar and Haigam wetlands have shrunk by half due to unregulated industrial and urban growth and illegal mining in the Doodh and Shali Ganga, causing siltation, erosion, weakened embankments, and flash floods. Gypsum ore extraction in Uri has intensified air, water, and noise pollution. Open mines in nearby towns have polluted Kazinag National Park, leading to deforestation, landslides, and respiratory diseases. The increase in encroachment into forest land without afforestation efforts has significantly decreased tree cover, exacerbating flash floods and soil erosion, highlighting the crucial role of trees in flood prevention[39].

Indeed, a recent research visit to Dawar, in Gurez Valley, during an ongoing terror instability revealed clear causations between unchecked industrial development, ecological devastation, and conflict. The 330 MW Kishanganga hydroelectric power project (KHEP) in the valley involves damming the Kishanganga river, creating a proposed 103-metre reservoir submerging much of the valley, including twenty-five villages, six high-altitude habitats, and eight camping sites. The project plans to divert water through a twenty-

seven-kilometre tunnel to Bandipore, ultimately joining the Wular Lake and Jhelum River. Initially assigned to a Swedish consortium, SCANSKA, the project was later handed over to the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), executed by the Hindustan Construction Company (HCC). Land acquisition encompasses cultivated and non-cultivated land and forested areas, with an estimated cost of Rs 3642.04 crore, leading to the displacement of numerous families and consuming 535 acres of land. Efforts to relocate affected families face challenges due to limited available land, existing military presence, and avalanche-prone terrain. While the project officially impacts 801 families, the total direct and indirect impact remains unrecorded. Families have petitioned in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking fair compensation. Opposition to dams and hydropower projects centres on land dispossession and community displacement. The project significantly impacts Gurez, highlighting challenges with large-scale development[40].

The KHEP has not only resulted in the loss of homes, land, and livelihoods but also imperiled the collective identity and existential security of the nearly three hundred families of the *Dard-Shin* tribe in Badwam and Khopri villages in Gurez Valley. Gurez, once a gateway along the ancient Silk Route to Gilgit-Baltistan, connected Kashmir to Kashgar, now part of Chinese Xinjiang province. Archaeological findings in Gurez suggest it was a significant cultural and trade hub. As Kashmir's original inhabitants, the *Dard-Shin* possess a distinctive language, culture, and ancestry. However, displacement due to the power project, without proper relocation within Gurez, threatens their unique identity. The promised rehabilitation in Mirgund remains unfulfilled, as do the demands for jobs with NHPC as compensation for lost livelihoods. Families displaced by the Kishanganga project have migrated outside their ancestral land to places like Srinagar, taking up menial jobs to support themselves. Many now reside as tenants in the city, exposing them to vulnerabilities they would not face if not for the dispossession. This imposed migration has brought uncertainties, resulting in community breakdown, identity crisis, and the collapse of the community support system[41]. Another tribal community threatened by the project is the transhumant *Bakkarwals,* whose sedentarisation began in the late 20th century, influenced by pasture scarcity, militancy, modern education, and availability of health services. Due to the ongoing conflict and the construction of the dam, certain pastures near the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border have been marked as forbidden, impacting the *Gujjars'* and *Bakkarwals'* lifestyle and tribal culture. The past two decades of hostility in Jammu and Kashmir saw heightened exploitation by militants and

security forces, compelling tribals to provide food, labour, and even carry weapons between pastures due to transportation limitations[42]. Rehabilitation efforts, while aiming to address displacement, risk further shrinking cultivable land due to the dam. This could drastically impact the region's agricultural land, wildlife, and trout fish breeding cycles. Additionally, experts warn of potential extreme winters and increased flood risks in Gurez due to the dam. Climate change-driven extreme weather is heightening risks for *Gujjar* and *Bakkarwal* herders in the Kashmir hills. Flash floods, storms, and cold snaps are causing substantial livestock losses, impacting communities that comprise over 8% of Jammu and Kashmir's population. Additionally, alpine pastures, which are crucial for their animals, are diminishing due to cold snaps.[43] Alongside these challenges, allegations of discrimination against local engineers and labourers by the HCC have surfaced. Local labourers assert they receive lower wages compared to outsiders. NHPC has been criticised for not prioritising employment for those in villages that will be submerged by the dam, choosing instead to bring in employees from outside the valley[44].

The hydropower project's 2012 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) revealed severe threats to the Himalayan ecosystem, including flora, fauna, and human habitats. Construction activities were flagged for disrupting ecological balance. As noted in the EIA, the project's reservoir and river diversion negatively affected air and water quality. Deforestation for construction raised concerns about climate change, increased landslide risks, and soil erosion, impacting local vegetation and agriculture. The EIA also noted that inundation of agricultural and forest land posed a threat to local biodiversity, and that alterations in the regional ecosystem could lead to changed rainfall patterns. However, the Ministry of Environment and Forests overlooked the EIA's findings, granting project clearance. While NHPC profits significantly from Jammu and Kashmir's water resources, the region grapples with electricity deficits, especially in winter. Out of the total 330 MW capacity of the KHEP, only 12% will serve the State, while the NHPC will divert the rest to mainland India, excluding the local Gurez population from its benefits and leaving Gurez without power[45]. Conversations with resident villagers illustrated how their severance from their fields and homes has enhanced psychological and social stress, especially because they can no longer remain interconnected with the rich natural biodiversity of their childhood. This is especially so for tribal-pastoral communities who have been intimately engaged with their environment for generations. They hesitantly expressed how their allegiance to the State has been disheartened due to these circumstances and that they understood why the local youth would

participate in terror activities to exact reprisal or simply in the hope of a better life.

There seems to emerge a relationship between unfettered industrialisation, environmental degradation, and deleterious impacts on inhabitant employment, housing, and food security. Industrial expansion and mining occur in peripheral or remote border areas in Kashmir, where inhabitants have diminished access to appropriate civic goods and to transport or communication to the mainland. Unemployment and destitution are common as local natural resources are exploited to develop industrial and urban centres, and inhabitants are left continuously food and water insecure. They are divested of their traditional employment and sustainable engagement with nature. They are also often the worst affected by the water, air, soil, and noise pollution wreaked by construction and infrastructural development, and they are excluded from accessing any benefits emanating from their hardships. In these conditions, it becomes evident why inhabitants are vulnerable to incursions by terrorist influences which offer them better standards of living and purportedly sympathise with their justifiable disillusionment with the government. For tribal populations, intermingled with their natural environment for generations, the degradation of organic resources – which often hold religious significance, and provide employment, nourishment, and shelter – due to industrialisation and urbanisation, has fomented both spiritual-psychical and socioeconomic stress. This disillusionment with the government has often culminated in law-and-order instabilities. The experiences of tribal communities hold special significance to a Gandhian analysis of environmental degradation and conflict. Gandhi's portrayal of the primordial man-nature *advaita* unity is a contemporary reality for many indigenous populations that have historically been embedded into their natural environments. Certainly, whether these communities are truly able to maintain and inhabit societies where these unifying "ethics of reciprocity"[46] may be conserved and realised, is affected by a range of extraneous factors – including governmental assimilation policies, business interests and practices, and local attitudes towards indigenous cultures – upon which they have little to no control. Even so, these convictions are pervasive in collective myths and memory. If undisturbed, these communities utilise natural resources sustainably, ascribe religious value to them, and remain deeply linked with their ecosystems. The generational yearning for the restoration of autonomy over how indigenous populations interrelate with the forest explicates their patterns of action and protest. Therefore, from both the socioeconomic and the spiritual-psychical perspectives, unmitigated industrialisation and urbanisation

corrupt these relations, culminating in insecurities and instabilities (Figure 1).

What is the Way Forward?

Given these evaluations, it is important to deliberate on the way forward. National growth and development are impossible without industries and urbanisation. Where industries rob certain populations of employment and habitation, they also provide occupation opportunities for others. The development-environment question has plagued governments, civil society organisations, and the public for decades. What is the opportunity cost that must be paid for privileging the ecological relationship of a community, over the employability of another? Indeed, even Gandhi could not deny the necessity of certain industries in developing the newly independent State. He would permit the institution of State-owned industries of heavy transport, steam, electricity, and machinery that did not threaten to enslave its users and were integral for producing elemental necessities. He extended tacit support to the country's early industrialists as integral to the movement for independence[47]. Thus, an absolute proscription of industrialisation and urbanisation cannot be the answer. Since the challenges may be analysed from the Gandhian perspective, resolutions might emerge, too.

Gandhi posited that individual growth should lead to spiritual self-realisation rooted in *satya* and *ahimsa*[48]. *Satya* encompassed both subjective truths and the ultimate truth of the unity of all living beings, as per *Advaita Vedanta* philosophy. *Ahimsa*, stemming from *Advaita*, meant refraining from violence towards any being, recognising that violence is a transgression against the self and others within the interconnected whole of existence. Gandhi viewed violence as exploitation and a denial of individual dignity. He asserted that every individual has a moral right to pursue spiritual emancipation, demanding respect for their integrity and that of others. In Gandhi's belief system, violence reduces individuals to mere instruments, claiming exclusive access to absolute truth or absolute good. He held that mortals cannot grasp the absolute and that each person possesses the potential for moral redemption. Degrading violence not only harms others but also brings about isolation, helplessness, and societal tension. In the context of advaita unity, actions like overexploitation, pollution, desertification, deforestation, and habitat degradation also constitute violence. *According to Gandhi, Ahimsa entails sustainable, need-based consumption and the restoration of natural resources*. He proposed that resolving the environmental degradation-conflict challenge requires adhering to *ahimsa* and *satya*, ultimately giving rise to the

socio-eco-political concept of *sarvodaya*. *Sarvodaya* envisions the well-being of all components within the *advaita* unity. It aims to foster interdependence, where each element contributes to the best of its abilities and shares common resources regardless of individual contributions. This society prioritises the moral, spiritual, political, social, and economic welfare of all, rejecting discrimination based on caste, class, gender, or religion. Gandhi's concept of trusteeship, where the affluent function as custodians for the benefit of the less privileged, plays a crucial role in *sarvodaya*. It envisions a non-violent, non-exploitative, and decentralised socio-eco-political structure grounded in ecological preservation, founded on the inherent equality of all living beings upheld by *satya* and *ahimsa*. *Sarvodaya* appears to offer a promising solution to the environmental degradation-conflict challenge[49].

According to Gandhi, operationalising *sarvodaya* in political society requires decentralised power through an interconnected system of duties and responsibilities. This structure revolves around village communities, emphasising a bottom-up approach rather than a hierarchical pyramid. Power is sustained at the grassroots level, with villages as primary custodians of legitimacy. Activities beyond the village extend to larger communities, creating a network where each circle complements the others. Gandhi advocated a village economy that balanced agriculture and cottage industries to prevent unemployment and alienation. The "oceanic circle" binds these decentralised communities, promoting mutual interdependence and cooperation, embodying an ideal democratic model[50]. While Gandhian principles have influenced India's legal and political landscape, notably through the Directive Principles of State Policy and the Gram Sabha's role in the Panchayati Raj through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992., they are seldom applied in environmental and industrial conflict resolutions.

Despite efforts by activists, sustainability principles have only marginally infiltrated development planning, with critical costs often overlooked in favour of the so-called public interest. Analyses of dams in Jammu and Kashmir expose them not as purely neoliberal ventures but as tools of territorial control[51]. Developmentalism, rooted in utilitarianism, often sacrifices individual rights for collective societal gain. Public purpose, a linchpin of Indian development, grants the state eminent domain powers, justifying land acquisition for the "greater good"[52]. This depoliticisation conceals control over water, land, and people, avoiding accountability. Dispossession and displacement are inherent in development projects, with environmental and social impacts frequently overlooked. Hydropower projects in

Kashmir are more than profit ventures—they symbolise political control, with power wielded through water resources. The *Dard-Shin* tribe bears disproportionate, unjust costs for the public interest. Legal processes validate their impoverishment, justifying it as a necessary sacrifice for development. These projects are presented as turning local youth into productive citizens, curbing militancy. The use of force by the State against protesters in response to resistance, however, highlights the unequal power dynamics between the citizen and the State. The associated costs disproportionately affect marginalised communities, further deepening poverty. The absence of representation in decision-making processes disregarding local agencies and the dominance of institutions like NHPC (rather than the Jammu Kashmir State Power Development Corporation) reinforces institutional hegemony and the State's control over the territory and waters of Jammu and Kashmir[53].

Conclusion

In Kashmir, therefore, urbanisation and industrialisation activities and processes seem not to have emerged from the conception of either *ahimsa* or *sarvodaya*. In most instances, modernisation and growth have been pursued at the cost of those most vulnerable and most injured. Even as destitute inhabitants at the peripheries find their environments ravaged and their homes and occupations disintegrated, they are often excluded from the benefits that this exploitation generates. This is to say nothing of the specific consequences these circumstances have for vulnerable populations of women and children, excluded from substantive decision-making and buckling under disproportionate economic, health, educational, and political disadvantages. The perception of ecology as a passive recipient and provider of anthropogenic activities has crystallised the humanity-nature rift and has culminated in the extensive exploitation and alienation of both local communities and their natural environment. Perhaps practically unfeasible, but a Gandhian resolution to the environment degradation-conflict problem would emanate from consultation with local communities and a conviction that welfare must be all-encompassing and holistic. As long as those most disadvantaged are excluded from decision-making processes and bargaining power and deprived of their spiritual and traditional ties to their environment, it is improbable that the resulting instabilities may be resolved.

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Social Cohesion: Understanding the Gandhian Way

Asha Carol Antony
Riju Saimon
Thomas Mathew

ABSTRACT

The relationship between individuals and society and the integration of individuals into society has always been a problem of social science. The events of social upheaval have brought the question of cohesion to the forefront. Social cohesion is a major academic subject, a public policy issue, and an emerging research area that aims to bring cohesion to a multicultural world. The paper is an attempt to elucidate Gandhi's contribution to building a coherent society. The life of Gandhi, his determination and application of nonviolence to fight against the racist government in South Africa, his solemn resolution to act against injustices by the British in India, the role of ashrams, the influential role of truth in social and political agitations, and the strategy of Gandhi in building relationships and trust are analysed from the perspective of social cohesion.

Key words: *social cohesion, truth, social and political agitations, social relationships,trust*

Introduction

SOCIAL COHESION HAS recently become the focus of increased sociological and psychological scholarship. The expansion in the trans-boundary movement of people created complexities in socialisation and cultural adaptation, which necessitated an academic enquiry for a cohesive society. With a trans-disciplinary overreach, this concept has led international institutions, multinational bodies and several European countries to develop a series of reports and committees for policy formulation, especially in the wake of globalisation, which has

invoked a renewed interest in it. The philosophy of Gandhi embodies elements of cohesion, which had a deep-rooted socio-psychological influence with a universe-wide resonance, even prior to the emergence of social cohesion as a subject of academic interest and research problem. This paper attempts to study Gandhi's life and perspectives on social cohesion. The concept of social cohesion is utilised to analyse how the innate dynamism of Gandhian ideology contributed to political stability, economic equanimity, and social resilience. Truth is the fundamental principle of Gandhi's social cohesion and is the base upon which he built the superstructure of a cohesive society. The paper explores the role of truth in influencing the personality of Gandhi and his social and political experiments. The strategy of Gandhi in building robust relationships, a sense of belongingness and trust between the individuals by means of truth, is reviewed to understand the perceptions and reformations he initiated at the personal and social levels. The events of Gandhi's life, his determination and application of methods to fight against the apartheid government in South Africa, the uncompromising stand he took against the injustices committed, and his persuasive ways through which he demystified the congress party, invoking his countrymen to unify against the British with Satyagraha, the powerful weapon he employed in his social and political agitation for the realisation of total freedom are examined. The paper is structured as follows: -the first part tries to bring definitions and essential ingredients of social cohesion, and the second portion explains how Gandhi's perception of the integral universe and his conception of humans are related, the third and fourth segments comprehend major social interventions and political programmes, led by Gandhi in South Africa and India. The sixth section explores the ashram's role in inculcating cohesion values. The final segment analyses Gandhi's contribution to building cohesion by using the major components of social cohesion- social relationships, sense of belongingness, and trust- based on the definitions of major theorists in the area of social cohesion.

Social Cohesion: A Conceptual Overview

The history of mankind has been marked by periods of transition and turbulence, characterized by paradigm shifts in socio-cultural, political, and economic environment, which compelled social scientists to address the problem of social cohesion. Even though the precise phrase, 'social cohesion' was not used, it has always been a primary concern of human society from time immemorial. The phrase 'social cohesion' became popular in the 90s, due to the renewed attention of academicians and politicians, in the background of the divisive impact

of neo-liberal ideology. Social cohesion is 'an ideal to strive for'[1], and understanding the subject requires the need to streamline the meaning and characteristic elements of social cohesion. The research on the concept of social cohesion is in its nascent stage, mostly done by European countries and international organisations at the macro and meso-level. Jane Jenson defined social cohesion as a multidimensional interactive model that can be measured using indicators of inclusion and equality, legitimacy and participation, recognition and belonging[2]. Paul Bernard explained social cohesion as the management of conflicting values[3]. Social attitudes and behaviours, as well as societal institutions, are the two variables of social cohesion identified by Andy Green and Janmaat[4]. Bertelsmann Stiftung's social cohesion radar defined social cohesion as the common good and qualitative interactions between members, reflected in durable and positive socio-emotional ties and good will for the community. Social Cohesion Radar study by the Bertelsmann Foundation developed social relationships, connectedness, trust, and participation as the determinants of social cohesion[5]. Chan defined social cohesion as a state of affairs and an attribute characterized by repeated "vertical and horizontal interactions"[6] among community members residing in a particular geographical area. Noah E. Friedkin is of the view that social cohesion denotes positive attitudes and behaviours, formed when interpersonal interactions operate to sustain the 'structural conditions"[7]. Susan McDaniel studied social cohesion as relationality, social caring, and connectedness[8]. David Achiever and Jolanda Van Der believed that social cohesion includes individual attitudes and orientation, communities, and group and institutions[9].To Dickes and Valentina, social cohesion means solidarity, concern for the common good, political and socio-cultural participation, and institutional trust[10].To Wellman and Wortley, social cohesion constitutes networks of ascribed and achieved ties[11]. According to Antonio M Cheisi, social cohesion solved the dialectics between solidarity and integration and underscored its four dimensions: structure, culture, identity and action[12].

Social cohesion has an ideational and relational aspect. The dynamic evolution of social cohesion reveals its futuristic strength, and investing in its research will bring positive outcomes, contributing to politically stable societies, economic growth, and social resilience. The parameters - a sense of belongingness, mutual trust, reciprocal interactions and participation - are definite prerequisites that theorists and policy-makers cannot ignore. No single tool or definition is possible for measuring social cohesion. There is no consensus on what defines social cohesion, for theorists have narrowed it down to make it precise,

and policy-makers have broadened it to include any aspect that affects the sociopolitical milieu as a problem of cohesion. Social cohesion is a construct with multidimensional properties, its definition and measurement need to be scaled with respect to the uniqueness of each country. It consists of micro, meso, and macro levels, existing at individual, community, and institutional levels. Social cohesion is an existential and universal concern with profound theoretical and pragmatic importance. Being a policy tool, Judith Maxwell broadly defined social cohesion as shared values,goal-oriented common efforts, and the feeling of being in the community[13]. The scope of social cohesion lies in understanding the social integration of individuals, reconciliation of conflicting elements, the tangible and intangible factors of social life, and its impact on the cognition, actions, identity, and material life of the individuals.

Man and Integral Universe: Gandhian view

Gandhi considered humans an ingrained part of nonviolent and non-hierarchical collective, in sync with the universe, which worked on the principle of interdependence. His organic view of the universe explained human nature and its reciprocal existence, deconstructed the pyramidical concept of the androcentric view, advocated a holistic vision of cosmic man[14] to bridle gullible and avaricious character of humans, and stood for equal entitlements and legitimacy to all living creatures. Men, being rational, were divinely destined to protect and distribute the resources, embrace the composure of an integral universal system, and reach their optimum potential through service, mutual love, and self-restraint. The oneness of cosmic life mirrored the Gandhian ideal of a coherent society where humans are original debtors who should contribute to the mutual goodness of fellow beings. Gandhi advocated for positive strokes to promote the innate goodness of human nature by unleashing spiritual energy through the persuasion of truth. His essential reasoning was being and becoming one with living creatures, leading to the confluence of morality, religion, and spirituality[15]. A cohesive society, for Gandhi, is embedded in an integrated vision of the universe, where humanity stands indivisible and free of oppression and exploitation.

Gandhi in South Africa: Laying the foundation

Social cohesion can be analysed from the perspective of the social relationships which Gandhi successfully built and whether he was able to convert those social networks functionally and effectively to mobilise and unite his fellow beings for social and political agitations- in this case social and political experiments in South Africa- provides

a curious case. The Indians in South Africa engaged mainly in business and were transported from India in the 1860s to work on sugar and coffee plantations and were derogatorily addressed as *coolies*. When these indentured labourers were freed after five years, they opted to stay back and became successful entrepreneurs, but the whites perceived their vertical mobility as a threat. Thus, South Africa became a land of segregation, where Indians were alienated and subjected to various kinds of discriminatory measures. During this turbulent period, Gandhi received a letter from the firm of Dada Abdulla requesting his service in South Africa. The arrival of Gandhi proved to be a turning point in the prospects of Indians, both in South Africa as well as India. His first experience of the ill-treatment of Indians happened in South Africa. Gandhi himself was thrown out from the train on his way to Pretoria for the case of Abdullah Sheth. He subsequently faced discrimination in the stagecoach in Charlestown followed by more unfortunate events. The freezing experience in Pietermaritzburg stirred his mind, "should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults"?[16] and this dilemma influenced the historic decision to heal a dissipated society filled with racial hatred.

Voting rights for Indians in Natal were taken away in 1894. In an extreme case of discrimination and racism, Indians in Transvaal and Orange Free State had to pay an entry tax, apart from which they were denied ownership rights on the land. In 1896, he returned to India to volunteer when the plague broke out. He made a clarion call for a unified vision and to think beyond religious, regional, and caste affinities. He made appeals like *An Appeal to Every Briton in South Africa, The Indian Franchise, an Appeal*', distributed green pamphlets, submitted massive petitions, letters to the editor, etc. Gandhi, who used India as a platform to raise funds, understood the importance of public relations and formed opinions in support of the rights of Indians in South Africa. He successfully lobbied the Secretary to the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, to interfere. The 1897 Natal Act was passed, whereby the Indians in South Africa got electoral rights as British subjects, though it was sabotaged later. The incident also led to the formation of the Natal Indian Congress, the first organisation of Indians on a permanent basis. Gandhi's prolonged stay in South Africa allowed him to regain the self-respect of Indians through the art of nonviolent struggle. Thus, his virulent campaign against the Indian Franchise Bill united and organised the Indians in South Africa, rendered them a voice, boosted their confidence, and made a landmark in the history of mankind. People hailing from diverse fields, women and miners protested, disobeyed, and courted arrest by means of

Satyagraha against Transvaal's 1907 registration law that gave authorities arbitrary right to intrusion. The preachings of Gandhi inspired individuals like Louis Sorabji Shapurji Adajania, Polak, Kallenbach, and Schlesin, who became his strengths in the promulgation of satyagraha techniques in South Africa. Even though he opposed this Black Act, he proposed voluntary registration as a solution, which enraged the Pathans; they assaulted him but maintained his equanimity and decided to trust the opponent, for an implicit trust in human nature was the essence of Gandhian philosophy. Even though they did not repeal the Black Act, that truth would reveal itself was what Gandhi believed as the means of truth is nonviolence, and is possible only to the strong. When the whites lynched him on his way back from India to South Africa, he forgave them and insisted on serving his countrymen's goal of freedom through nonviolence. The eventual result was the passage of the Indian Relief Act in 1914[17].

Gandhi showed adept networking skills, used the right links, raised resources, and capitalised on influential individuals like Rayalchand bhai, Sheth Tyeb Haji Khan Muhammed, the State Attorney, Krause, etc., to tackle the issues of Indians in South Africa. His method made him a rallying point, and he slowly and steadily became a recognised face in Pretoria. His exceptional powers of discernment and judgement helped him understand the class structure of Indians in South Africa, which consisted of Muslims, Hindus, and Parsis, as also the fact that Indian Christians were under the influence of the white clergy. The connections with prominent personalities like Sheth Haji Muhammad Haji Dada, Sheth Abdulla Haji Adam, Mr Subhan Godfrey, the headmaster of a mission school, local merchants, were tactfully used by Gandhi to make the Indians coalesce for their political rights, despite their class, communal and regional differences. A monster petition was submitted, copies were given to newspapers, and the issue got wide attention[18]. Thus, he fine-tuned his networks and showed the ability to elevate relationships to a higher, universal plane, as observed by Einstein[19]. Realizing that the power of ideas lies in their dissemination, he used the *Indian Opinion* to communicate, propagate, and report on his activities in India and England and the medium to connect both the Indian and the British leaders. In all these attempts, he showed an intuitive intellect to identify the right persons to sense the pulse of the people. His zeal, patience, energy, endurance, and honesty to serve made him a leader and an organiser. So it is rightly observed, "without Gandhi the struggle for Indian rights would collapse or at least lag" [20]. The events attested Gandhi as an individual magnet and a social link between people belonging to diverse communities. The method by which he convinced his people,

his voluntariness, instant appeal, convictions, failures, and rectifications exemplified how articulate, clear, and adaptive he was in the realm of social relationships. The Indian community in South Africa got a new lease of life, and to Gandhi, South Africa, where he stayed for twenty years, became his founding ground and the political laboratory, which moulded his leadership skills and perfected the ideas of Satyagraha.

Building cohesion: Gandhian strategies in India

Gandhi's return to India led to a paradigm shift in India's national movement, and in the initial years, he was a political agnostic who attached social and moral meanings to agitations in Champaran, Kheda, and Ahmedabad. The Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 against the injustice meted out to indigo cultivators served as a testament to the emergence of Gandhi as the champion for marginalised farmers, and his credentials as an interlocutor. The request of Rajkumar Shukla to Gandhi to visit Champaran and the enthusiasm shown by the peasants on his arrival revealed the trust people had in him, even before his entry into Indian politics. Moved by the appalling socio-economic and cultural situation, Gandhi, with his disciples' help, took the initiative to start schools in Champaran, where lessons of self-dependence were taught. Gandhi's political leadership and direction in the Kheda satyagraha against the decision of authorities to collect revenue amidst famine ultimately positioned him as a mass leader. Gandhi, who realised salvation begins with the farmers, could successfully impart the feeling of oneness and Indianness in the freedom struggle by incorporating the problems of farmers. In the Ahmedabad mill worker's strike, Gandhi successfully organised the workers to gain their wage entitlements[21]. Burt's analysis on bridging the structural hole using brokers to gain comparative advantage[22] finds its classic example in the incredible networking skills showed by Gandhi in getting strategic support from Anasuya, the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, who played an influential role in the dispute resolution of mill workers. Arbitration was his key to peace; conciliation was his force. Gandhi stood beyond selfish gains, and in his deeds, people could see his deep affection for them, which became a unifying force to generalise and expand his satyagraha techniques from local level nonviolent struggles in Champaran, Khera and Ahmedabad to pan India level organisation of non-cooperation, civil disobedience and quit India movements. Such concerted actions created a mental force, enhanced the confidence, and courage of the people through which he integrated India.

Gandhi's use of persuasive measures like non-payment of taxes, renunciation of educational institutions, picketing, disservice to

military, boycott of foreign clothes, disobeying unjust laws, and his promotion of khadi in the non-co-operation movement manifested his capability to come up with an effective plan of action in synchronising and disciplining his followers, that finally led to large scale political mobilisation of Indians. He was arrested for protesting against the draconian Rowlatt Act, but he gracefully faced the trial and drew the attention of the judge to the systemic issues that made even loyal people disobey the law. This incident also revealed his belief in the power of truth to change the minds of others. The eventual shocking incident of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre accentuated the political entry of Gandhi in India.[23]By choosing salt, the basic element of life and a common grievance that affected everyone beyond religion, as the symbol of protest for the Dandi march, he aimed to send a strong message to the authority that it is one's moral duty to disobey an unjust law. The moral weight of Gandhi was that he could make individuals experience the significance of truth and be able to make them absorb his ideology, thereby winning the trust of his followers to participate in social and political movements. He gave equal importance to political liberation and moral regeneration by means of Satyagraha, the staple principle behind the Gandhian model of social cohesion, which he successfully experimented with in South Africa and then implemented in India to achieve independence.

The Congress party before Gandhi was an elitist middle-class organisation ideologically divided into two camps that held strong caste-based biases. His relationship with the Congress party was special as he and the party enjoyed considerable autonomy and flexibility but were simultaneously intertwined. Gandhi can never be seen merely as a Congress leader because his stature, a one-time President of the Congress in 1924, surpassed the party boundaries. He collaborated with the Congress party but realised an esoteric upper class would not be able to bring freedom to collective India, and that both the Congress party as well as Indian society should undergo cultural and spiritual metamorphosis. He deconstructed elitism and identified the relevance of villages as the gateways of self-reliance and political expression[24].

To build a cohesive society, Gandhi aimed for the rise of all, i.e. *Sarvodaya* through the technique of Satyagraha. He realised the need for regenerating a caste-divisive, demoralised and self-centred India through constructive programmes to bring Hindu Muslim unity, for removal of untouchability, a ban on alcohol, use of Khadi, village industries, education, equality for women, economic equality, indigenous language, peasants, and worker's organisation.[25] Sarvodaya movement aimed to resurrect, and create a classless society,

and stood against blind consumerism, materialist instinct, and systemic stifling of individuals. Sarvodaya is possible only if desires, bodily impulses, greed, and consumerism, which prioritised man's materialist physique over his soul, can be bridled. He used symbols like the spinning wheel to project simple technology as an alternative to modernity and stood against heavy industrial-based capitalist economy, which would lead to a mechanised, profit-oriented, and market-determined society, consisting of atomised individuals. He believed in small machineries that can promote individuals' creativity, and shunned the machines that paralysed man's limbs. Machines need to serve the body's basic needs but should never dispirit the minds of individuals, so Gandhi's stand against machinery was not blind and outdated. Freedom is visible in social and cultural synthesis of individuals' moral plane, and this synchronization is what Gandhi always stressed during the independence movement of India. Gandhi's constructive programmes and the ideas of Sarvodaya principally aimed at social regeneration, embarking towards the path of social mobility. He focussed on employment generation and simple mode of production; his plans and programmes enabled people to lead a better life with respectable social status. Gandhi was a leader capable of revolutionising the thoughts and psyche of his disciples, and successfully utilised the potential of his social relationships to link individuals and different groups as bridges of cohesion for executing the idea of Sarvodaya[26].

Gandhi believed in the intrinsic power of India to practise nonviolence, the means and ends and the only technique whereby India could attain freedom. 'I often feel ahimsa is in truth, not vice versa, said Gandhi'[27]. Satyagraha was applied only after careful study and right assessment of the person's feelings, facts, and moral maturity. His decision to cancel non-cooperation movement after the incidents of violence in Chauri-Chaura showed that Gandhi penanced himself through vows and fasting, which he believed would cleanse not only himself but also his followers and opponents. The modus operandi of Gandhi to violent provocation by varied forms of moral responses like boycott, non-payment of taxes, non-cooperation, hartal, and fasting restored the confidence, dignity, and trust reposed by the people. Satyagraha activated the soul, integrated head and heart, and unleashed the spiritual synergy within. By blending humans' moral and rational nature, it aimed to build a moral society and instill a sense of humanity, emphasising truth as an instrument of reformation, as the way to stay closer to the people and the absolute sovereign that gave a sense of oneness [28].

Ashrams as communes of cohesion

Gandhi has always integrated his way of life and thoughts, and Ruskin's '*Unto This Last*' inspired him to contemplate, practise, and act upon his deep convictions, which led to the establishment of ashrams:- Phoenix farm in Natal and Tolstoy farm in Johannesburg in South Africa and Sabarmati ashram and Sewagram in India.His first ashram, Phoenix, was established in 1904, and two acres were given to each family; they engaged in farming, gardening, prayer and were given mental training in satyagraha techniques to fight against racial injustice. Coming back to India, Gandhi wanted to establish ashrams, primarily to settle and train the boys who were part of his South African agitation. Sabarmati was a deliberate choice as it was his home town, where he could do easy networking and interactions. He also felt Ahmedabad, being a textile centre, provided an apt atmosphere for learning hand spinning and weaving. The Sabarmati ashram provided adequate space for a library, spinning, weaving, dairy farms, cultivable plots, where inmates got initiated into constructive programmes and a group life based on truth, self-reliance, non-violence, chastity, and dignified labour. Sewagram ashram in Wardha envisioned his model village, which contributed to nation-building, provided education based on the Gandhian Nai-Talim scheme, and acted as a vital connecting link that eventually unlocked the key to swaraj, by spreading Gandhian ideals to the hamlets of India[29].

Ashrams were the replica of his ideal community, founded on truth, humanity, justice, and discipline, to enact a truthful life, individually or collectively, and the ashramites were expected to abide by eleven vows-ahimsa, truth, non-stealing, brahmacharya, non-possession, labour, control of the palate, equality of religions, swadeshi, and untouchability. Gandhi, who saw untouchability as "miserable, enslaving and wretched"[30], exhorted people to uproot the caste-ridden mindset. His decision to admit a Dalit as the first member of his ashram was met with stiff opposition even from the staunch Gandhian Maganlal, who quarrelled with him and went to Madras[31]. However, Gandhi was able to influence him to think differently about untouchability, so he returned as a changed man and became a loyal comrade and an ardent advocate of the Gandhian way of life. This incident revealed Gandhi's solemn resolution to liberate his followers from parochialism and ascriptive tendencies so that the ashrams could be projected as a macro-cohesion model.

Ashrams were human laboratories where Gandhi tested his moral and spiritual hypotheses.'[32] The way he inspired the industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj, who sponsored hospitals, educational institutions, etc

for Sewagram ashram, to become the trustee of his trusteeship doctrine is an example. He could successfully garner financial support from Ahmedabad's textile business groups and Bombay's shipping barons for the Sabarmati ashram. These were instances by which the doctrine of trusteeship was applied, whereby the landlord became a cipher, by realisation of God in oneness with the serf. The ashrams ensured spiritual and material quality of the followers, which was inevitable to build trust and fellowship, and to perfect the continuum of right and duty.[33]Gandhian doctrine of Trusteeship based on the principle of immediacy, non-possession, and cooperative decisions was reflected in the interdependent and peaceful environment of ashram, where the individual became an embodiment of trustee.

Ashrams, tied by ideals of commonality, emerged as a family, under the moral and democratic patriarchy of Gandhi, bringing forth spiritual and moral elevation of inmates. Family was the basic unit in this agrarian commune, where his ideals of health, agriculture and learning were practised, and families were adopted and influenced to develop social empathy, an indispensable condition for political mobilisation. Ashrams trained inmates to control their impulsiveness and self-indulgence, recruited civil resisters to participate in non-cooperation, civil disobedience and quit India agitations, and engaged in constructive activities between the spells of movement, and thereby became dynamic places where truth was experimented and politics spiritualised. The ashrams acted as political schools, where the individual became both the teacher and the student[34]. The social environment of ashrams built by Gandhi created an atmosphere of face-to-face interactions, close and diverse networking which can be compared to Barne's study on how social networks of friendship and kinship created a social field in Norwegian villages.[35]Truth was his cognition and his praxis, and the gel Gandhi used to fuse the individuals of the ashram, to construct social relationships, and to instill trust and sense of belongingness. Social cohesion does not mean shallow relationships or submissive existence but includes interactive group structures, shared feelings,social skills,trust and acceptance[36]. The community living in ashrams constituted an important prelude to a coherent society, and it bears testimony to his vision of truth, based on interdependence and self-reliance, to lead a model life with no remnants of violence.

Gandhi and Cohesion: **An analysis**

Gandhi had always been a protagonist of staying together for a peaceful and self-regulated society; his life and experiments were about building and reinventing society on the foundation of truth. Self-

change was his precondition to become the guardian of nonviolence, where the individual acted as the primary agents of change that led to a radical transformation of society. Truth was the cardinal principle, essential thread, veneer, and core of his conception of society**.** Truth is endearing but its "path has always been for the brave because a much greater effort is required to go up the steep slope of the truth than to climb the Himalayas,"[37] said Gandhi. His enlightenment towards truth was an outcome of his own long-drawn trials and he too faced the temptations and tribulations of an ordinary mortal. Truth was breath to Gandhi; no relationship of Gandhi was built on falsehood. Despite the apprehensions of his wife, his decision to transfer the prizes he received from the Indians in South Africa to community fund and his insistence on the importance of honesty in business in the first meeting summoned in Pretoria, revealed that relationships, dealings, and career were always bound by truth. Holding onto truth is the means to a cohesive society, and its deviation brings psychological and socio-economic catastrophe to both the individual and humanity[38]. Society to become cohesive requires a feeling of belongingness among its members. He realized that neither an individual nor a community becomes a part of the society without an element of truth, and this dictum should be inculcated in the young minds as any traces of lies need to be nipped in the bud until it becomes a fortress against treachery. Truth was the stepping-stone through which he built trust, and the refined cobble Gandhi used for social and political mobilisation of India.

According to Burlingame, social cohesion has a therapeutic effect[39]. Gandhi's presence and principles had a curative effect on people, which was a positive reinforcement in building trust and intimacy in confiding and sharing personal problems. He was an individual who stood tall among political leaders, a person who was accessible to all, someone whom people could rely on in times of their personal crisis, offering solace and providing answers to all pertinent questions. His willingness and ability to take decisions in difficult situations helped people to move forward unfalteringly. According to Budman, the dimensions of social cohesion are group experience, involvement of individuals, and trust.[40] This is reflected in how people got together, treated each other, and engaged with one another. He groomed the people to become active participants in the freedom movement and brilliantly used various techniques to make people participate in large numbers. He took the initiative to bring women into the fold. For example, more than fifty percent of participants in the salt satyagraha were women[41]. He devised unique ways to grab political power, to make his people represent, to evoke political consciousness, and to bring

political, social, and economic justice. Mark S. Granovetter underscored the importance of strengthening the weak ties for social cohesion; Gandhi was quick to grasp 'weak links'[42] and knew well how to make use of his acquaintances and connections. The alliance built by Gandhi was multiple, collaborative, and bonding, and was characterised by interpersonal, intrapersonal, and intragroup features.

Schacter defined social cohesion in terms of morale and attraction of the group[43]. Gandhi emerged as a powerful force who uplifted morale and increased the number of followers. He revamped the Indian National Congress, emphasised the need for social inclusion, and Congress grew by leaps and bounds. As a leader, he had a larger canvas, the rural base of the country came together under his leadership, and his unit of cohesion was always villages, which were his training grounds, where he initiated his constructive programmes. The attainment of independence was impossible without uplifting and including those eighty percent of people who lived in villages, which made Gandhi focus on rural development as his primary agenda[44]. Gandhian social cohesion does not mean monopoly and homogenous community, but a diverse and self-regulated society that attracted peasant community. Social cohesion is about conflict resolution and cooperation; Gandhi assisted, engaged in open talks, and initiated friendly gestures. The success of Gandhi was that he could make followers who showed a willingness to share, saw a common cause, and could solve interpersonal and intergroup levels of conflict[45].The interactions between members and leader, emotional quotient, feedback mechanism, and members' contribution to the group[46] highlighted how the political stature of Gandhi became a role model to the people.

Cohesion is a dynamic process and a preeminent concern of any group study. No group can work without building a team.The need to stick together helps to pursue goals and satisfy the affective needs of any group, be it the group of sports or friendship or work [47]. The mentor of Gandhi, Gokhale, also influenced his integral view; his guidance was both political and spiritual stimulation for him. The privilege of hailing from a politically affluent family, where his grandfather and father worked as ministers, provided a natural setting for Gandhi to enter the world of political intrigues, with an inborn talent for mediation and reconciliation[48]. Even in the post-Gandhian phase, the Gandhian approach is pervasive, existential, and practical[49].The inter-religious meetings led by Gandhi, post-Noakhali communal pogrom, played the role of reconciliation, but the shocking demise of Gandhi left India groping in the dark[50]. Gandhi faced disagreements and died heartbroken without fulfilling the dream of

an undivided India, but the principles of Gandhi had a "curative factor"[51], which deserved to be emulated, for his life is a guiding principle of social cohesion. His ideas became building blocks of trust, which he used to nurture social relations for nonviolent action.

Being in a group means regulation of behaviour and a group should have a structure and organisation[52]. Gandhi's satyagraha approach expected mental restraints from his followers, and in every agitation, he religiously insisted on the practice of nonviolence; the truth was the philosophical essence that framed Gandhian organisations. His communication with the lowliest member, constant connections, and inculcation of common goals for a cooperative, nonviolent way of life based on truth stimulated attraction, allegiance, commitment, sense of security and created a working alliance for his group[53]. The innovative method of Satyagraha changed the hitherto appeasement policy of prayer, petitions, and pleas, followed by the moderate wing of the Congress party. The ideas of Swaraj, Sarvodaya, and Trusteeship revealed his conceptualisation of a village-oriented society based on self-regulation, which neutralized ascriptive group formation, to make way for macro interactive spaces, and to build a cohesive society through the idealisation of deeper meanings of truth.

Conclusion

Humans cannot survive without being in communion as it is our innate nature. Society is the embodiment of varied social relationships, manifested in economic, political, personal, and impersonal forms[54], and the crux of conflict, compromise, and cooperation in society happens at the individual level. An understanding of social cohesion comes inevitably from Gandhi's deeper convictions at the individual level, which stands closer to Toye's definition of social cohesion as the sum total of an individual's willingness to cooperate[55]. According to Gandhi, without delving into the microcosm of society, the macro-level understanding of cohesion is futile; a society without an individual has no existence and exerts little influence. Gandhism begins from the individual to the society and aims to transcend boundaries and social change. For Gandhi, who pictured his ideal society in the canvas of truth, the individual-level cleansing in the cauldron of truth was indispensable for his way of cohesion. Gandhian techniques of action based on truth are used to create supportive relationships , an interactive social atmosphere of bonding, sense of belongingness, trust, and participation between individuals that paved the way for social cohesion. The uniqueness of Gandhi is his understanding of dynamism in social bonds between members, between a member and the group as a whole, and between members and the leader, which

according to Piper, are important indicators of social cohesion[56]**.** Social cohesion, to develop, requires the attraction of the individual towards the group and a group-closeness among the members, involving team, purpose and goals for togetherness[57]. Gandhi whose intellectual acumen, ideological commitment, organisational ability, and precise mode of action could garner political and emotional support by bringing forth social consolidation, became a symbol of integration. An individual who imbibes the values of Gandhi cements the society to cohesion, senses the feeling of belongingness, and cultivates social relationships, but at the same time accepts differences, reciprocities, and exchanges as inevitable requisites for social cohesion, and in this venture, truth will be their guiding light.

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Unwinding the Threads of Subjugation: Man-Wife and Nation-People Dichotomy in Tagore

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ABSTRACT

Nationalism is undoubtedly one of the most cherished political ideals in the modern world. It has been incarnated both as a destructive force as well as a progressive, constructive force throughout history. In post-colonial countries like India, the nationalist discourse is pivotal in understanding the crux of social life. Among the great line of nationalist thinkers in India, Tagore occupies a unique space. His relationship with nationalism is quite intriguing. While everybody in colonial societies considered the nation the ultimate political salvation, Tagore was moving against the current. Not only did he provide an incisive critique of nationalism, but he also projected the organic social life of pre-colonial India as a possible alternative. While Tagore remains a moral critique of nationalism, he accepts an alternative idea of the nation as a civilizational category. This paper tries to investigate Tagore's concept of nation with a critical perspective. Within Tagore's projection of the nation as a harmonious, transcendental unity, certain groups are silenced and made passive. Tagore's essay 'The Ideal of Marriage' gives us a glimpse of his patriarchal bias in nationalist imagination. This will provide fresh insights into Tagore's concept of nation and nationalist discourses in India.

Key words: *Tagore, nationalism, gender, marriage, civilisation*

Introduction

INDIA, IN TAGORE'S opinion, is a nation of communities. He stated that trying to create a country in India was like creating a navy in Switzerland. Because homogeneity is the basis of nationalism and

nation-state concepts[1]. Tagore argued that Modern India's claim to nationhood was fundamentally flawed because India could not succeed in retaining the unifying spirits that kept diverse people together for centuries and had allowed conflicts between faiths and caste division to countervail that spirit. Tagore's conception of politics and culture, nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity, and cross–cultural education can all be understood on the basis of his commitment to the cause of human freedom and universal brotherhood.

Tagore's position in relation to nationalism is traditionally identified as a humanist critique of nationalism. His cosmopolitanism wanted to extend humanist values from national territory to international. Since the proper seat of humanity lies in the universal, national particularity is a stage that we have to transcend. Therefore, he emphasized universal humanism. Such ideas of Tagore prompted Jawaharlal Nehru to call him "the great humanist of India[2]". Yet the purpose of Tagore's critique was not to dump the idea altogether. Tagore retained the idea of nationalism, however, in a radically different sense. He made many interesting observations related to nationalism, which opened a wide field of imagination. It was seen as a leap from conservatism, a conception of nationalism that was steeped in rabid xenophobia and exclusion. American philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum, in her influential essay Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism (1996), invoked Tagore's novel Ghare Baire, in which the commitment towards human community and its moral excellence is favoured over the militarised solidarity with one's nation. For Nussbaum, Tagore was a defender of moral rationality.[3] In her interpretation, Tagore is the great champion of a cosmopolitan vision. Nussbaum and others have argued that Tagore should be read as a cosmopolitan ethics and pedagogy model, suggesting that his novel *The Home and the World* demonstrates a humanist ideal of citizenship.

Most of Tagore's understanding of nationality is based on ancient Indian philosophy, which held that the entire globe was one nest. Tagore attempted to equate nationalism with concepts like peace, harmony, and welfare to distance himself from the mainstream belief in nationalism. He continues by saying that if India intends to help the globe in any way, it should only be in the shape of humanity. Tagore considered that freedom of mind is more important apart from political freedom[4]. The Euro-centric notions of freedom have forced us to consider political freedom as an ultimate destination in the journey of freedom in our country. Emulating this model can contribute to nothing but aggrandising our greed for possession. Hence, we should give up this narrowness and broaden our horizons to realise freedom of mind. The fulfilment of nation can only be

realised through its progressive expansion in terms of acceptance.

Tagore was not an antinationalist or anti-patriot in the actual sense of the term. It is just that the idea of cosmopolitanism finds a greater place in Tagore's writings throughout the later period of his life, simultaneously upholding the moral spirit of humanity and human unity above everything else as the highest ideal to be achieved by man[5]. This supreme goal, Tagore argues, must be at the root of all human actions. It is only through the path to human unity that freedom in all spheres can be achieved, be it political, artistic, or spiritual. To that end, all such forces that are narrow and divisive, turning man against man, must be smothered before they can engulf and destroy humanity[6].

Tagore's spiritual foundation was the idea of 'true freedom' that liberates men from all means of confinement. Political freedom, on the other hand, is limited as it is always contingent on external agencies like the state. According to him, "Those people who have got their political freedom are not necessarily free; they are merely powerful[7]." He defines 'nation' as a social construction levied to achieve a mechanical purpose. Invoking the archaic spiritual history of India, Tagore imbibed an audacious understanding of 'true freedom' for his countrymen, which is a condition through which an individual takes himself near to the 'Supreme Reason'[8]. Political independence does not elevate the personality of individuals to this level of perfection.

Tagore is also one of the most accepted voices after Gandhi's conception of the nation. That is why its fundamental contradictions surprise us. Some of these contradictions and conflicts can be seen in Tagore's discussion of nationalism, as in Gandhi. Some of Tagore's most unexpected observations are in his contemplations on women and nationalism. Although many non-conventional female characters have been born from his pen, Tagore has, at least in some places, taken the cloak of orthodoxy when it came to marking women in the nation's social fabric[9]. By paralleling the identity of the woman and the identity of the nation's people, it ignites many disturbing thoughts. It is interesting to analyse how Tagore observes the subjugation of women and people of a country in the backdrop of nationalism. The contradiction of being rooted in Indian tradition, including its reactionary elements, while embracing the emancipatory sentiments of modernity defines Tagore and his approach to the nation[10]. This helps us to understand the nuances of Tagore's position on nationalism and highlights the latent dark spots in India's nationalist discourse

Women and Nationalism

Nationalist discourses always evoke the language of gender as the

body politic of a Nation is impossible to conceive without gendered attributes. Since the nation is the teleological end of human collectivity, it is symbolically represented as an individual writ large or an idealized persona[11]. Accordingly, the fulfilment of national life is to harmonize every social relations to match this ideal. Gender configurations have often mobilized in support of nationalist causes. This is particularly evident in the relation between the nation and the feminine. On the one hand, nationalism formally promises equal political participation and equal political worth. Many nationalist movements have witnessed spectacular women's participation, and nationalist ideology has been significant in providing access to women's public participation. Due to this reason, many hailed nationalism as the harbinger of political equality, as, by definition, a nation provides equal stakes to all its members. In other words, nationalists throughout history have behaved as though the creation and maintenance of a nation depended on convincing women to adopt a particular style of femininity[12]. Not all nationalised ideas of proper femininity have been the same; some have pushed women to participate in public life to a greater extent than others. Male nationalist leaders urged men to support women's public participation as they believed it was crucial for the achievement of national independence (in the 1920s, 1930s, China, Vietnam, and the 1940s, 1950s, Indonesia). This is particularly true in the case of nationalist movements that had anti–colonial characters and those in which the working class played a leadership role. Their imagination of the nation was characterised by a total rupture from the past, which necessitated a renewed role for women in national life. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, the role of women in socialist reconstruction was meticulously debated. For the first time, women were understood to be indispensable for the economy and national reconstruction. Massive industrialisation, socialisation of domestic work and conducive working conditions contributed to a flourishing climate of female public participation. If we look at the propaganda posters of the USSR during this period, the depiction of women clearly communicates the emergent sense of autonomy in them.

Despite the smokescreen of equality, the nation has some inbuilt trouble in dealing with the feminine. From antiquity onwards, the archetype of the 'public being' or the citizen was a male prerogative[13]. Aristotle completely excluded women from public participation as all the constitutive virtues of an ideal citizen were identified in men. The body politic of a nation has to be guarded and managed by free men while women create as well as constantly reproduce the conditions for it. Every nation identifies itself with feminine virtues like motherhood; this, however, makes their role passive. The invocation

of femininity is to highlight the fact that a nation like women needs to be protected and taken care of. This paternalism functions at the core of nationalist ideology, whose social effect is to perpetuate women's role as the object of protection. The maternal nature of the nation also implies her capacity for infinite sacrifice and endurance to suffering. Deifying these characteristics and identifying women as the bearers of these virtues effectively put them in a state of passivity. The 'purity' of the feminine is ironically raised to exclude Women from participating in 'profane' realms like politics and public action. Besides, women play various roles, including biological producers of new national members, symbols of national uniqueness, carriers and makers of cultural narratives, agents enforcing national boundaries, and active participants in national movements. The sacrificial mother and warrior are ascetic as its masculine other, therefore, complete the nationalist diagram of gender roles. The sacrosanct nature of sexual union in nationalist discourse also indicates the fact that it considers the heterosexual family as its foundation, punishing deviant tendencies as harmful and weakening. A heterosexual family is indispensable for the reproduction of a national community, but it is also significant in the sense of providing a miniature of national life. It is not a coincidence that the metaphor of family plays a dominant role in nationalist literature as this connection gives intimacy as well as a concrete shape to an erstwhile idea.

The contribution of feminist scholarship is important in unveiling how nationalist discourses reproduce patriarchal structures. By gendering the concept of nationalism, feminists have explicated the biases and exclusions in nationalist language and openly misogynistic substructures of nationalist movements. The symbolic representation of nation is impossible without gendered semiotics. In other words, gendered social ordering and the rise of modern nation-states cannot be separated[14]. Women's bodies become important in the nationalist discourse on the war in which they play the dual role of bearing the purity of the nation and, at the same time, appearing as a prize to be conquered. The nation typically sees women as mothers or, in effect, reproducers of the national community in both a biological and cultural sense.[15]

Nationalism as an ideology and programme is therefore deeply connected with gender and is founded on a firm platform of fixed gender roles. Every nationalist ideology is imbibed with a divine duty of protection and paternalism, both of which are interpreted to be the sole virtue of men. On the other hand, women remain the passive other of the nation, whose role is solely to reproduce the conditions of the ideal nation. Men and women have quite different

perspectives on the nation and nationalism. Women and "the nation" have historically had significantly more difficult relationships. The need to understand the origins of this uneasy relationship between women and the nation and its effects drives feminist interpretations of nationalism. In the traditional narratives, women and men have identical relationships to the concept of nation. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were constructed on a foundation of prescriptions of the ideal and politically necessary—femininity and masculinity. Additionally, the concept of the country has been permeable enough to allow women to contribute through more generally political channels, such as oral histories, recipes, and private schools. However, because nationalist organisations were so receptive to these fresh methods of political mobilisation, women were frequently converted into the targets of these techniques rather than the agents. In the Indian context, there has been a mixed response to women's participation in national movements. Women's basic lives have remained unchanged, often even as mainstream representation has emerged. Even as many of the national leaders were vocal about women's equality, there were also some extremely anti-women acts.

Tagore and Nationalism

The last sun of the century sets amidst the
Blood red clouds of the west and the
Whirlwind of hatred.
The naked passion of self-love of nations, in its
Drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the
Clash of steel and the howling verses of
Vengeance (The Sunset of the Century,1899)

In 1899, Tagore wrote The Sunset of The Century, which was later added to his book 'Nationalism' in 1917. Tagore accentuated in this poem that a naturally built human society is far more, in essence, better than the so-called artificially created nationhood. Tagore stated, "The idea of the nation is one of the most powerful anaesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes, the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion – in fact, feeling most dangerously resentful if it is pointed out"[16]. The element of cultural anxiety is quite pressing in many ways. For the men of letters and intellectuals, the enormous social transformations around them were too complex to grasp. This is further complicated by the fact that the social class they belong to and the interest it represented were important reference points for their opinion-making. British rule

in India was favourable for a large section of Indian elites in terms of economic mobility and opportunities. However, colonial modernity also leads to a radical rupture with the established social norms. There was a change in the horizon of meanings and symbols that completely disoriented Indian elites. The point of confusion was about the appropriate response to modernity. Some of this group wholeheartedly welcomed the advent of modernity and believed they could benefit from the process. They believed the destiny that awaits us is to become an Anglicanised India with Western sensibilities and consciousness. On the other end of the spectrum were the conservatives who outrightly opposed the social changes and wished to go back to the 'harmonious social' order of the past. Tagore was also caught up in this debate and struggled to reach a consensus.

Although Tagore was a scathing critic of Western nationalism, he envisioned a spiritual unity in the concept of Indian nationhood. For Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Tagore's best work, *Nationalism* (1917), is mistakenly treated as the compendium of his approach to nationalism. A quick look at the evolution of Tagore's position on nationalism reveals that categorising him under the labels of 'Nationalist' or 'Internationalist' is untenable. To overlook this complexity and paradoxes within Tagore will lead to oversimplifying his ideas to the level of completely misrepresenting them. Ashis Nandy has pointed out that, ironically, Tagore was already considered India's national poet. He not only wrote countless patriotic songs, but these songs were an inspiration to many participants in India's freedom struggle[17]. According to him, Tagore was a patriot but not a nationalist. He was seeking to clearly separate patriotism from nationalism to construct a new conceptual system that would allow European-style nationalism. Similarly, Tagore was an active part of the Swadeshi movement and the then-boiling nationalist sentiment in Bengal. For a brief period, he was fascinated by the brand of cultural nationalism that was popular among the Bengali elites, which more or less sustained in his later journey with the concept.[18]

Tagore's critique derives its inspiration from a long drawn-out tradition of sceptics who cast modernity as a degrading phenomenon[19]. He was convinced that the fetish towards nation, which overshadows every other form of human association, is an evident pathology of modernity. The Westphalian order which established the modern system of nation-states is, in fact, embedded in European socio-political intricacies. Sovereignty was the central problem of politics in the West, and the attempt was to fix sovereignty on an agent. In the Middle Ages, sovereignty was vested with God, and the church represented its institutional form. The history of nation-states is the history of

oppression and bloodshed. Its advent is inextricably linked with the rise of imperialism and the virulent practices of racism and discrimination[20]. Nation is antithetical to organic communities, which form out of spontaneous human encounters and cultural exchange. While grassroots communities are full of life with constant flux and unlimited potentialities, Tagore considers the nation a closed system. This is because the nation is already composed of certain fixities and internal logic, which turns its members into mere instruments of its own perpetuation. Herein lies the radicalism of Tagore. While most of the anti-colonial movements considered the nation its ultimate point of reference, Tagore identified the same rationality that produced the exploitative colonial system in the nation. On the one hand, his critique of the nation is an outgrowth of his polemics toward state-centred social life. This is a theme that runs through many thinkers within Indian political thought. State, for them, was a point of total reification where life and its potentialities are wholly submitted to an instrumental logic. Modern social associations like State and Nation disrupt the symbiotic relation between collective and individual, pushing the individual from his self-empowerment (*atmasakti*[21]*).*

Tagore, therefore, places his position precisely on the sanctity of India's civilizational wisdom. Tagore's fidelity to India's past was not just a conservative turn. To him, every civilization has its own ways of organising its social life. In the West, states and nations became the focus of this activity after a certain time. In the case of India, it has always been a society (*Samaj).* The politico-cultural category of *Samaj* defies the classical logic of *Realpolitik* that renders the nation as involved in a perpetual game of survival. Here, the legitimacy of the community is not determined on the basis of Sovereignty or the capacity to provide a stable life. Samaj attains relevance because it enables an enchanted life rooted in the realisation of certain values[22]

This observation of Tagore highlights an important aspect of India's political evolution. Unlike the West, where a change in state power will lead to drastic socio-political transformations, In India, the change in state power was a negligible event. The state power was never potent enough to penetrate deep into India's embedded social relations. For many within Indian political tradition, this feature of India's political life is sacrosanct and needs to be protected from an alien reconfiguration. The reverence for 'God' and 'Humanity' and the unending yearning for the absolute made us incongruent with any self-limiting concepts like nationalism[23]. The virtues which sustain an organic community and a Nation are entirely different. While a community is composed of harmonious co-living, which strives for self-sufficiency, Modern institutions, including nation, are inherently

excessive. Thus, wars and imperialist tendencies are built within such arrangements. Similarly, the seemingly omnipotent power of the Nation-state is, by definition, a tyrannical arrangement as it lacks any means to check its own excess. Just like all enlightenment products, nationalism is also infested by the instrumental logic of subordinating means for the ends. The reason of the state (Raison d'etre), which is the predetermined telos of the state, subordinates all other demands to its satisfaction[24]. The human community, therefore, steeps into powerlessness as all the capabilities have been cast into the bureaucratic apparatus of the Nation-State. To conclude, Tagore's critique of nationalism is part of his larger opposition to modernity and its paraphernalia. This often slides into an uncritical idealisation of India's past and its values[25]. The function of gender in his thoughts on nationalism must be understood in this light.

Tagore's ideals of Marriage and Nation

Tagore envisioned a spirituality-based nationalism while sharply criticising its Eurocentric version. It was a poetic collective consciousness with an emphasis on humanity. Tagore's concept of 'nationalism' is the essence of an undivided nation with a fearless mind and independent knowledge. Tagore has described his concept of nationalism in many places. The book 'Nationalism' by Rabindranath Tagore is a dissent to the government that builds a totalitarian state based on 'nationalism'[26]. Tagore says that India's unique character is the brotherhood that flourishes amid many differences. The Western invasion impinged on that fraternity. Tagore asserts that nationalism should not act as a machine to expel certain groups of people but as a force of humanity to hold people together.

During the long period of freedom struggle, we have given the country the concept of women. We, her children, are freeing Mother India from age-long oppression. The concepts of motherland and mother nation are very old. We often say that *Janani* and *Janmabhoomi* are greater than heaven. Among the most popular patriotic songs, *Vande Mataram* held the position of the national anthem. But with independence, we had deflections on the very concept of Mother India. As a symbol of this, the national anthem chosen by post-independence India has adopted a male concept as the leader of the masses and the arbiter of India's fortunes[27]. Philosophers and cultural theorists have underscored the relevance of rituals like anthems, gestures, and salutations in constructing a national public. Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak have mentioned the event of undocumented immigrants singing the Spanish national anthem, which in many ways completely distorts the symbolic edifice constructed around Spanish national identity[28].

The point is that although such acts do not produce any tangible results, they are nonetheless politically relevant. To publicly show a gesture of political belonging with regard to a country having a long legacy of racial extermination and colonialism reveals a contradiction, showing the gap between legal freedom and the actual practice of freedom. Therefore, even an act as insignificant as singing could radically upset the ideas surrounding a nation and its belongingness (p.246). This is similar in the case of marriage as it signifies one's social belonging. The *nation-people* relationship moved towards the equation of *man-woman*, *husband-wife*, *ruler-ruled*[29]. Tagore, the master of the national anthem, has a long essay entitled *The Ideal of Marriage*. He approaches child marriage with an emotional fervour, which comes amid the dissemination of Hindu marriage customs. He makes strange arguments to idealise this extremely rudimentary practice. Tagore's defence of early marriage is not founded on the sanctity of *Shastras.* For him, the love demanded from such a marital relationship has a definite spiritual character. This detached love founded upon a sense of duty is an essential virtue for a patriot. According to Tagore, the love of one's nation cannot be made contingent. It is neither transactional nor utility-oriented and cannot be reduced to raw passion. Patriotic love is ascetic in character, where love transposes an individuated ego toward larger unity. This kind of response can also be found in Kierkegaard when he encountered the question of how the corporeal love of humans can be connected with the divine. He found that the only way to rectify human love's inconsistent, fluctuating nature is to recast loving as a duty. For Tagore, an arranged marriage at a pre-mature age is desirable as it sets the perfect ground for the practice of duty-bound love. Tagore describes marriage as the triumph of spirituality over sexuality. Hindu marriages and their appeal to purity and spiritual fulfilment become a point to contrast with the highly materialistic marital relationship prominent in Western societies. Tagore even believed that Hindu ethics positions women above men. Women, accordingly, are the embodiment of feminine energy whose spiritual quality is unmatched by anything.

Since the eighteenth century, sexual love, particularly in its conjugal dimensions, has been a potent cliché for thinking about the nation in complicated and varied ways[30]. To test whether the sacramental marriage bond would hold more sway than the practice of cohabiting or the desire that develops beyond the marriage tie, Tagore envisioned an unintentional switching of spouses in *Noukadubi,* one of his significant novels. Love and nation were first closely and conflictingly intertwined in *Gora*, where themes of religious nationalism and love prohibited by society were prominent[31]. Ironically, at this point, Tagore

also began to appear more conservative. Tagore was aware of the fact that Indian history and tradition do not have a concept of equality between sexes. Still, he maintained the opinion that this inequality is fundamentally rooted in social expediencies. The social requirements of raising children and maintaining the stability of marriage demand that the wife's fidelity be more important than that of the husband[32]. It is out of this view that Tagore supported the remarriage of widowed males more than female widows. When a widow remarries, the child born out of the first marriage would go rootless or undergo transference of lineage, both of which are socially unsettling. Unsurprisingly, Tagore follows the same line of argument for issueless widows. At the root, he is reintroducing gendered roleplaying as indispensable for communal life. In the case of early marriages or betrothals, Tagore associated them as a byproduct of extended families; the early marriages were useful in the context of strong kinship ties, which had the capacity to resist fragmentation and the formation of nuclear families. He was observing the social transformations going before his eyes and was convinced about the weakening of extended families and the rise of the nuclear family. Nuclear households could be run by mature men and women alone and can completely detach from other family members. Following a typical conservative line, Tagore believed it had a deracinating effect. In Bengal, social reform movements had already altered the family structure among the elites. Educated Hindus had managed to set up their own independent families after their parent's opposition to accepting the idea of an educated Hindu bride, the regressive and caste-ridden practices surrounding traditional families[33]. Rabindranath Tagore underwent brief but visible phases of social and cultural conservatism in his literary and personal life. Despite this, he and his creations embodied the progressive aspect of man-woman relationships that would emerge in contemporary Bengal. Tagore believed that human love was a metaphor for the love of the divine, which helped him poetically express and enhance the sense of equity and social justice between the sexes. Tagore was inherently at odds with how modernity is shaping human love. Tagore postulated that the marriage ceremony in India is a declaration of war against nature's strongest warrior, lust. There is an age when the attraction between a man and a woman is strongest. If marriage is to be regulated according to the will of society (rather than that of the individual), it must occur before that age. So, 'child marriage' means marrying a woman before she realises that she is a woman. "Spontaneous love cannot be trusted for the purpose of marriage," writes Tagore[34] He further explains that it should start even before marriage. So, at an early age, we slowly present an

ideal in front of our girls through poems, stories, and rituals. When she finally gets a hold of him, he is no longer a person but an idea to her. This is where Tagore's link to early marriage and patriotism unfolds.

Tagore refuses to ground Conjugal love on carnal attractions or feelings precisely because it lacks the underlying element of transcendence. Such attachments will be illusory and depend entirely on one's calculated utility. If an entire generation understands love as a pleasure-seeking venture, it cannot produce a subjectivity capable of sacrifices and heroic action. Here, the act of love has a devotional quality, too. Devotion and love are deeply connected in Indian mythology, where devotion elevates men from their limited realm of consciousness to a higher unity. Tagore expected that only India's marriage institutions are capable of cultivating these virtues among people, and Western infiltrations to transform marriage into a mere consented co-living must be vigorously resisted. As discussed before, modernity's conception of love lacks this principle of higher union. They remain atomistic and exchange pleasure without thereby forming a strong commitment to each other. In that case, traditional marriage is founded upon a will to have eternal commitment, which will be necessary to cultivate a patriotic youth. Patriotic love, just as in the case of marriage, is a union with an ideal. It is neither a social contract nor a matter of legal commitment. Tagore's patriotism is not state-centric either, as a national community is prior to the state, and one is committed to the abstract nation; in other words, the ideas that sustain the nation are civilisational categories. It is important to note that in Tagore's imagery, nation-to-people relations are presented within a paradigm of Master-subject dialectic. In other words, Tagore linked the subordination of women to men, like people to nations. There is something wrong with allowing a woman to grow and develop herself, find her passions, make independent decisions, and tame at a young age to revolve around a male ideal.

Have we not started to give 'the people' a feminine identity in the discourse of nationalism? Do they not want to believe, not have to make their own decisions, or have to obey something? It should be assumed that Tagore captured this situation earlier. Was it through a 'child marriage' that our nation left the mother (concept of Bharat Mata) and married a leader (*Adhinayaka* of Tagore)? How did he (Adhinayaka) return the faith that these people (wife) had reposed in *Pati* (Husband), whom he had never known except in the form of an idea? How did the husband that Tagore wanted to bestow on women in the form of an imagined idea feel for the Indian people?[35]

Even though the nation is an abstract concept, It was presented

before the common people in the form of a number of concrete and real human beings—their rulers. For over seven decades, they have ruled over people's bodies, homes, and properties. Tagore's Indian ideal woman must conquer lust or not understand it for what it is, but a man can indulge. A man has the right to possess a woman even before she begins to understand what marriage is. In precisely the same way, do the people and rulers appear in the concept of nation or state, dealing with the people? Did they accept the people as partners in this relationship? They stand before her like kings who come to *Swayamvaram* every five years. Once the garland falls on the neck, the people are their property. They do whatever they can to threaten, beat, exploit, rob, bait, and injure. In stories, poetry, and rituals, the purity of obedience and the greatness of love for one's country are being proclaimed as women's subjugation is glorified. Tagore observed the people of the country as docile women. The nation assumes the guardship of the people, as a man does to a woman. Just as she was given the image of a husband before her consciousness was awakened, the people began to imbue them with ideas of the nation before they grasped the reality of freedom. Tagore associated the subjugation of the people with nationalism, while that of the woman was associated with her spiritual liberation.

Conclusion

The discourse of nationalism has given rise to many conflicting discussions. Although they were often progressive in the postcolonial context, quite conservative strains of thought emerged too. Tagore is the noble face of Indian nationalism. His writings and political and cultural contributions to Indian nationalism are worth mentioning. While many of the scholarships on Tagore rightly pointed out the progressive and emancipatory aspects of his nationalistic ideal, there is a less explored conservative side. This conservatism is not exclusive to Tagore but is shared by a whole line of thinkers who were critical of modernity and, in that process, knowingly and unknowingly valorised their historical past. The most problematic of Tagore's diverse perspectives on nationhood is his analysis of marriage and nationhood. Tagore idealises the patriarchal institution of marriage and rants about the necessity of its survival. Tagore discusses aspects of spirituality in the Discourse of Discipline and the institution of marriage.

Tagore presents marriage as the spiritual emancipation of women. He attributes a kind of transcendence to the subjugation of women. Tagore also conveys the weak logic that the people of the nation have an identity as weak, opinionless, as women. Thus, femininity is

attributed and asserted on the people. As the man/husband is the protector and guide of the woman/wife, the nation exists by subduing the people. Thus, Tagore gives an answer to the slave life of the people of the nation and women; for this, he associates nationalism and spirituality.

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A Study of Gandhi's Influence on Arne Naess and his Eco-Philosophy (Deep Ecology)

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ABSTRACT

Though many scholars acknowledge that the life and philosophy of Gandhi influenced Arne Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology), the influence of Gandhi on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) has largely been neglected in the available literature. The present paper argues that Gandhi's impact was profoundly important and influenced some key concepts, such as the Self and self-realization of deep ecology. It is explained that most of the scholars have ignored Gandhi in the process of understanding different influences on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) because they find Hindu, especially Advaita Vedanta philosophy, incompatible with some of the basic concepts of Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology). However, it is argued that it is not proper and correct to see Gandhi as either Hindu or Vedantic to understand the influence of Gandhi on some key concepts of deep ecology. It is further explained that the influence of Gandhi on Naess is more appropriately explained and understood when Gandhi's ideas of Self and Self-realization are seen in this light of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy.

Key words: *Gandhi, Arne Naess, Mahayana Buddhism, Advaita Vedanta, Self-realization*

Introduction

IT IS WELL ACCEPTED that Arne Naess's thoughts are characterized by originality and freshness, though they also carry upon them the stamp of a number of influences. On several occasions, Naess admitted

that he had come under many influences, like Alan Watts (1915-1973), Daisetz Suzuki (1870-1966), Gary Snyder (1930), and others. He further acknowledged that Soto Zen monk Dogen (1200- 1253), Spinoza (1632-1677) and Gandhi (1869-1948) have influenced him remarkably. He also taught Gandhi and Spinoza, semantics and philosophy of science, for over thirty years. He argued that "Gandhi needs help to enter the history of philosophy" and added that "his philosophy has to be extracted from action and speech."[1] He accepted it as a challenge and wrote on a wide range of important issues and analyzed the life and philosophy of Gandhi during his lifetime: *Gandhis politiske etikk* (1955, in Norwegian only), *Gandhi and the Nuclear Age* (1965), *Gandhi and Group Conflict* (1974), "Gandhi: Merely a Man" (2005), and "The Metaphysics of Satyagraha" (2005) are a few among his other works on Gandhi. He has often emphasized how important Gandhi has been to his success. Nevertheless, though different works of scholarship to analysis the influence of Gandhi on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) appear to be caught up in a strange contradiction that can be characterized by a spectrum of observations ranging from blissfully oblivious to overestimated, the influence of Gandhi on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) has largely been neglected in the available literature. It has been observed that although most scholars acknowledge Gandhi was one of the prime inspirations of Naess, the influence of Gandhi on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) has not been adequately elucidated in the existing literature.

The present paper argues that the mere statement of the fact that Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) was influenced by the life and philosophy of Gandhi, or its due acceptance, is hardly sufficient for accurately evaluating the vast and varied course in which Gandhi influenced Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology). Further, the present paper argues that Gandhi had a deep impression on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology), which captivated him greatly. His specific influence on Naess and deep ecology needs to be explained adequately. The present paper is an effort in this direction. The first section of this paper discusses how Gandhi and his influence on environmental movements/studies in general and on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) in particular have been understood and acknowledged in the existing scholarship. The second section of the paper tries to understand the possible reason for Gandhi being ignored by most scholars while discussing different influences on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology), although Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) is extraordinarily decisive and monumental. The last section of this paper

accepts Thomas Weber's argument that it is Naess's concept of Self-realization that, more than anything else, connects him with Gandhi and his philosophy[2]; hence, it explains how Naess's ideas of Self and Self-realization are influenced by Gandhi's concept of Self and Self-realization to highlight Gandhi's specific influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology).

I

Existing Scholarship

Let us first discuss the more general aspects of the topic before moving to the more specific ones. First, let us examine what scholars have to say about Gandhi's role in contemporary environmental movements/studies. On the one hand, there are scholars like Triloki Nath Khoshoo[3] and Vinay Lal who describe Gandhi as 'a practicing ecological yogi' and emphasis the importance of his practices like vegetarianism, austerity, self-reliance, renouncing processions beyond our needs to underline his influence on contemporary environmental movements. Lal argues that Gandhi's practices and conduct suggest 'an ecological vision of life' rather than his speeches and writings. In one of his remarkable essays, "Gandhi and the Ecological Vision of Life: Thinking beyond Deep Ecology", Lal argues that Gandhi was in every aspect an ecological being, and his everyday bodily practices, his observance of silence, and his abhorrence of waste all equally point to an extraordinarily expansive notion of ecological awareness. On the other hand, scholars like Farah Godrej are concerned about such studies that over-empathize Gandhi's idea of simple living, minimizing material conception and self-denial, while discussing environmental issues. He writes, "Contemporary environmental movements by and large over-emphasize the self-abnegating, self-denying and self-scrutinizing ascetic components of Gandhi's thought…'' and argues that "confrontational political aspect of Gandhi's nonviolence must be brought to the fore in discussions of environmentalism."[4] Scholars like Godrej argue that Gandhi's idea of radical nonviolence and direct confrontation Satyagraha can play an important role in giving the right direction to contemporary environmental movements.

Some scholars like R P Pathak argue that Gandhi's critique of modern civilization, emphasis on rural industrial life, and decentralization of production are evidence of his environmental concerns and a remedy for today's environmental problems. Pathak writes, "He [Gandhi] expressed his reservation against the western model of industrial development, which has caused environmental

degradation. Perhaps due to this reason he suggested an alternative model of development, which was free from almost all types of catastrophic effects and exploitation of man by man as well as of nature by man."[5] However, what is missing from Koshoo, Lal, Godrej and Pathak's analysis is the one element that Gandhi cared about most-the spiritual, the desire to see God 'face to face' or Self-realization. Indeed, Gandhi's life manifests a tortuous quest for Self-realization that does imply, as Gandhi insists, the achievement of self-discipline, self-restraint, conscious consumption, and fight against modern civilization with self-realization. Our argument, then, will not be that we cannot read environmental concerns into Gandhi's thoughts in the ways mentioned above scholars have done. Rather, it will be that such reading cannot help us to understand Gandhian ecology and miss the most important ways in which his thoughts could be a resource for the contemporary environment movements/studies because conscious consumption, the confrontational political aspect of Gandhi's nonviolence and critic of modern civilization can alone not satisfy the requirements of Gandhian ecology.

Now, let us examine what scholars have to say about Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology). On one extreme, scholars like Ramchandra Guha argue that Gandhi has been given more importance than it deserves to explain and validate deep ecology. These scholars argue that Gandhi's position (if any) on deep ecology, in contrast to the assumptions often attributed to him, is seldom supported by any textual evidence. Guha also writes, "Even an intensely political, pragmatic, and Christian-influenced thinker such as Gandhi has been accorded a wholly undeserved place in the deep ecological pantheon."[6] However, we must also keep in mind that Guha fairly warned his reader and made a caveat that while he is aware that the term deep ecology was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, he is referring specifically to the American variant.[7] On the other hand, there are scholars like Johan Galtung and Thomas Weber who raise concern regarding negligence of Gandhi and his influence on Naess and deep ecology. They argue that Gandhi's contribution to the processes of developing Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology) has not been spelled out with justice in the available literature. In his remarkable article Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhist Economics, Thomas Weber expresses his concern for the same; he writes, "While Naess readily admits his debt to Gandhi, works about him tend to gloss over this connection or ignore it."[8] Though Weber's article and his other book *Gandhi as Disciple and Mentor*[9] are very helpful in understanding the present state where Gandhi's contribution is being ignored and disregarded

in the process of discussing Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology), these works neither help to understand possible reasons for this overlooking nor help to understand Gandhi's influences of the different aspects of Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology). Though, he mentions Naess's own acceptance of Gandhi's influence on his philosophy, and he also quotes Gandhi's different writings, which can be helpful to articulate his concern for the environment, it seems that finding out the reasons for this disregard and explaining Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy in depth was not in the preview of his work. However, he argues that Naess's concept of self-realization is the best place for Gandhi's influence on Naess and deep ecology to be better understood or articulated. In the third section, we will explain Gandhi's influence on Naess's concept of Self and Self-realization, but before that, we will look for the possible reason that might be a hurdle in the part of exploring Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology).

II

Why is Gandhi being neglected?

Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) is a relatively new field of study, yet there are many scholarly works on it. Until his recent death, Naess was engaged in constructive debate with many scholars, which helped him clarify many of his concepts. An American philosopher, Spinoza scholar George Sessions, and academic sociologist Bill Devall and Naess have been writing on ecological issues and promoting Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology). Warwick Fox, Frey Mathews, Michael E. Zimmerman, Harold Glasser, Eccy de Jonge, Deane Curtin, Knut A. Jacobsen, Shahed Ahmed Power, Aitken Robert, Thomas Weber, Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg are other important scholars who had worked on different aspects of Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology). Among these scholars, Shahed Ahmed Power, whose PhD thesis is on *Gandhi and Deep Ecology,* and Aitken Robert, Thomas Weber, Deane Curtin, Vinay Lal and Kunt A. Jacobsen had written about Gandhi and Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology).

Most scholars merely acknowledge that Gandhi influenced Naess in formulating basic philosophical concepts of deep ecology. Ahmed Power, the best example, wrote a thesis on Gandhi and Deep ecology. Yet, he did not even try to engage himself to explain how some of Gandhian concepts are similar and different from basic philosophical concepts of deep ecology to underline Gandhi's influence on Naess

or deep ecology. Surprisingly, a PhD thesis titled Gandhi and Deep Ecology: Experiencing the Nonhuman Environment, having eight chapters and 247 pages, has only one chapter of 10 pages on Deep Ecology titled "Arne Naess". In this small chapter also, Power does not try to understand the relationship between Gandhi, Naess, and deep ecology and merely acknowledges Gandhi's influence on Naess and deep ecology. He writes that "Naess's formulation of deep ecology is a personal system and shares with Gandhi's self-realization, 'priority rule of nearness', vigorous nonviolence which recognizes that to live necessitates some killing and exploitation, and a move away from a stress on consumption to one that would satisfy vital needs."[10] Similarly, Vinay Lal in his article "Gandhi and Ecological Vision of Life: Thinking beyond Deep Ecology" acknowledges that Gandhi's own views would perhaps be deemed to have the closest resemblance to the philosophical presuppositions of deep ecology[11], did not attempt to articulate those closest resemblances. On the other hand, he submits that Gandhi's entire life constitutes an ecological treatise to argue that Gandhi's vision of ecology, as his title also suggests, was much deeper than deep ecology. It baffles everyone and forces them to think about what is exactly stopping scholars from talking in-depth study to highlight Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology).

Among the above-mentioned scholars, Deane Curtin gives us hints that can be helpful to understand- why he and other scholars ignore Gandhi's contribution while analyzing different influences on the development of Naess's eco-philosophy (deep-ecology). He writes:

> Gandhi's commitment to ahimsa, for example, has influenced Naess' political philosophy of non-violence. Yet the Gandhian influence does little to explain key deep ecological concepts such as Self-realization. Gandhi's "Self", the Hindu Atman, is explicitly rejected by Naess in favor of a Buddhist conception of no-self.[12]

If we look at the works of some other scholars, they also find Hindu, especially Advaita Vedanta, to be contradicting the basic philosophical outlook of deep ecology. For instance, Eccy de Jonge, while discussing Naess's concept of self-realization, rejects that there is any influence of Hindu or Vedanta idea of self-realization on Naess' idea of self-realization.[13] Knut A. Jacobsen is another scholar who argues in the same line. He writes, "Naess calls 'a mystic unity with the whole,' which suggests that 'all beings are one.' However, this does not imply the reduction of plurality into singularity (*atman-braham*), as in the Advaita Vedanta, but rather a consciousness about an organic unity of interdependent parts that is no different from

oneself."[14] He adds, "Naess has written that Self-realization does not postulate 'an eternal or permanent Self' and 'to realize oneself'… does not correspond to a Hindu idea of realizing the absolute atman.' It is explicitly denied that the individual egos dissolve like drops in the ocean, a beloved Vedanta metaphor."[15] Some scholars like Peter Marshall and John Clark go one step further and argue that Advaita Vedanta philosophy, which propagates an idea that the natural world has importance only as the manifestation of the Absolute, is a quite un-ecological, and indeed anti-ecological viewpoint.[16]

It appears that negligence of Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) has to do with scholars' perception of Gandhi as a Hindu, especially Vedanta Hindu. Because Gandhi often uses Vedanta vocabulary[17] to express his idea of Self-realization, and following Gandhi, Naess also uses the same vocabulary.[18] It might be possible that in the process of analyzing different influences on Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology), scholars generally tend to ignore Gandhi's contribution because they find Gandhi's concept of Self and Self-realization influenced by Hindu or Vedanta - is not comparable with the Naess's concept of Self and Self-realization.

However, the question that needs to be asked is whether Gandhi can easily be characterized as either Hindu or Vedantic in the conventional sense. Douglas Allen's answer to this question is 'a qualified yes and a qualified no'. He adds, "Gandhi is not a traditional Advaitin and, in many respects, he is not a traditional Hindu. He embraces many presuppositions, values, principles, and practices that are radical critiques of traditional Vedanta of Hinduism."[19] Moreover, there are many scholars like Raghavan Iyer[20], Margaret Chatterjee[21], Nicholas Gier[22], and Joseph Prabhu[23], who argue that Gandhi's basic philosophical ideas like Self and Self-realization were influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and not by Hindu or Vedanta philosophy. Margaret Chatterjee argues that Gandhi is an Advaitin only to the extent that he believes in the oneness of all that lives. However, she adds that Gandhi also explains that men must realize this oneness in the way they live rather than a mere abstract realization. She emphasizes that whenever Gandhi talks about Self-realization, he speaks on the matter closest to his heart and, incidentally, in an idiom that is true to the central message of Mahayana Buddhism.[24] We, therefore, argue that it is neither fair nor proper to see Gandhi as an Advaita Vedantist in our case. We propose that if we perceive Gandhi's concept of Self and Self-realization influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, it will lay down the theoretical framework where we can effectively and successfully articulate Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology).

III

Self and Self-realization: Mahayana Buddhism, Gandhi, and Naess

The nature and variety of Mahayana Buddhism influence on Gandhi are no less remarkable. Scholars like Raghavan Iyer, Nicholas Gier, and Margaret Chatterjee have done admirable work to show that it was active at various levels. Similarly, scholars like Deane Curtin, Elisa Cavazza[25], Julie Gregory, and Samah Sabra[26] have explained the influence of many Buddhist traditions of Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology). To undertake a fresh study to examine how profound Mahayana Buddhism exerted influence on both Naess and Gandhi's life and philosophy, though desirable, is beyond the scope of the present analysis. This is likely to be a fruitful avenue for future research. The scope of this paper is limited to show how the influence of Mahayana Buddhism on Naess's concept of Self and Self-realization was mediated by Gandhi. In other words, it argues that if we see Gandhi's concept of Self and Self-realization was influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and not by Vedanta philosophy, we will be able to explain Gandhi's influence on Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology) effectively. It further argues that it is Mahayana Buddhism and not Vedanta philosophy that can connect two different aspects of Gandhi's Self and Self-realization- first, the metaphysics or ontology aspect of Gandhi's Self and Self-realization and second, his emphasis on the necessity to fight against exploitation by others to maximal realization of the Self. These both aspects of Gandhi's thoughts must be brought to the fore in discussion on Gandhi's idea of Self and Self-realization and/or to understand Gandhi's influence on Naess and deep ecology. Because for Naess, deep ecology is not fundamentally about the value of nature per se, it is, like for Gandhi, about who we are in the large scheme of things (metaphysics or ontology aspects of Self) and how we are connected with others (Self-realization through identification or service to others). This is the correct approach should be clear if we first base our study on, among other things, an examination of Self, Self- realization, and the role/place of others in the process of Self-realization for both Gandhi and Naess and as it is understood in Mahayana Buddhism.

But before undertaking such an examination, we must remember the following two things. First, Gandhi can be easily criticized for not being ecologically enough because he was rather remarkably reticent on the relationship of humans to their external environment. Gandhi's ideas about human connectedness with nature, therefore, rather than being explicit, must be inferred from an overall reading of his

writings.[27] Second, while examining Gandhi's influence on Naess, we must remember that Naess was influenced by Gandhi but used Gandhi freely to develop his own views. However, both Gandhi and Naess's idea of Self-realization, their view of politics and especially of social and individual ethics, are firmly based upon their assumptions regarding human nature. They started with a definite conviction about what man is in his essential nature and what he becomes through a false view of himself, what he should and can become, and of his place in a law-governed cosmos.[28] Now let us see how Gandhi and Naess's idea of Self is akin to the Mahayana Buddhist idea of Buddha Nature and their idea of Self-realization is akin to the Mahayana Buddhist idea of Nirvana.

Mahayana Buddhism talks about two types of Self and way of their understanding - Ego (illusionary understanding of the Self) and Buddha Nature (the correct understanding of the Self). According to Mahayana Buddhism, the Self who is caught within the discriminating mode of thought recognizes any kind of association between itself and others, which is not a true self but an ego. In such understanding, an unbridgeable gulf separates the Self from the other. In this way of seeing, the Self recognizes itself as an autonomous reality independent of other selves. This leads to self-centeredness and egotism. According to Mahayana Buddhism it is not true understanding of the Self but an illusionary understanding of the Self. On the other hand, when Self is understood as a dynamic, spontaneous unfolding or Self is seen in active interaction with the world at every movement, it is considered the true Self or Buddha nature. According to Mahayana Buddhism, the true Self is always and necessarily in relationship with the world and others. The Self has no reality without the world. It has no self-sufficient, isolated existence.[29] Like Mahayana Buddhism, the Self is inescapably linked with other selves for Gandhi. As Gandhi says, "I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent."[30] The same is true for Naess's conception of Self. Like Mahayana Buddhism and Gandhi, Naess also believes that all our experiences are bound in an interdependent relationship to our idea of sleeves. Naess uses the phrase gestalt ontology to express this interdependence. He writes, "Gestalts bind the I and the non-I together in a whole."[31] It means that for Naess every living thing (Self) is to some extent 'in itself (self)' and to some extent 'in something else (self plus other)' due to the presumed gestalt nature of reality.

How is Mahayana Buddhism, Gandhi, and Naess's ideas of self-different from Vedantic Self? The fundamental basis of Vedantic philosophy is that the Self is illusionary; all things (Self) and events

are manifestations of the same ultimate reality- Brahman. On the other hand, for Mahayana Buddhism, Gandhi and Naess, the individual (Self) is the supreme consideration. As Gier writes, for Gandhi, "This affirmation of the integrity and reality of the individual is the principal reason why Gandhi cannot be related to premodern forms of thought such as Advaita Vedanta. If individuals are ultimately illusory or even derivatively real, the very formations of Gandhi's engaged ethics and political activism are undermined." [32] The same is true for Naess's idea of Self; for Naess self is not only a self- conscious subject (real) but source of all activities and achievements. As Arne Johan Vetlesen's article "Ethics and Value in Naess' Ecophilosophy" writes, "I pointed out that in Naess' ecophilosophy, everything seems to begin and end with the self."[33] Now, it is evident that for both Gandhi and Naess, the Self is not illusory like in Vedanta philosophy, but the Self is real like in Mahayana Buddhism, and inevitably linked with others. Now let us see how Self-realization is understood in Mahayana Buddhism and by Gandhi and Naess and how it is different from Advaita Vedanta idea of Self -realization (Brahman).

In Mahayana Buddhism Nirvana (Self-realization) is understood as direct, personal recognition of the interdependent existence of the Self and other beings. Kurethara Bose writes:

> The realization that one's Self is in an inescapable relationship with other selves leads to a deep, abiding concern for the well-being of others. It leads to reciprocity and communality. For the well-being of one rests on the well-being of all. The very identity of the Self is dependent on other selves. In nirvana, the Self recognizes its ultimate commitment to and solidarity with other beings. Nirvana, in relation to human society, is the realization and affirmation of human solidarity and communality. Compassion (karuna) toward all sentient beings flows inherently from nirvana. Those who dwell in nirvana dwell in compassion. Compassion is an intrinsic aspect of the Bodhisattva, the enlightened Self.[34]

Scholars like Joseph Prabhu argue that Gandhi's frequent invocation of Advaita is misleading — at least in its Vedantic version: he is not much interested in attaining a higher state of consciousness where the veil of *maya* might disappear. Rather, he takes this world with full seriousness as the area in which we fulfill our responsibilities.[35] In Gandhi's language . . . "We cannot dismiss the suffering of our fellow creatures as unreal and thereby provide a moral alibi for ourselves. Even dreams are true while they last and to the sufferer his suffering is a grim reality."[36] Therefore, for Gandhi, participating in every affair of human life, including politics, to minimize the suffering of every living being is unavoidably linked to Self-realization. As Gandhi

explains, "If a man seeks *moksha* [Self-realization] and still believes that he is independent, he will utterly fail in his aspiration. One who seeks *moksha* [Self-realization] behaves as society's servant."[37]

The same is applicable for Naess's idea of Self-realization. He also takes this world and the suffering of others as the very foundation of the idea of Self-realization. For Naess, diversity is necessary for self-realization because Self-realization depends on the realization of others. Jonge writes, "In Naess's view, recognizing that all beings have interests of their own means consciously striving to embrace the pain and suffering of others."[38] What Naess says to David Rothenberg in an interview is another testimony that Mahayana Buddhism deeply influenced both Gandhi's and Naess's ideas of Self and Self-realization. When Rothenberg asks Naess, 'Self-realization as a norm suggests… that you're doing it for yourself.' Naess replies: 'Yes, like Gandhi would say. When asked, 'How do you do these altruistic things all year?' he said, 'I am not doing something altruistic at all. I am trying to improve in Self-realization.'[39]

How is Mahayana Buddhist idea of Nirvana (Self- realization) and Gandhi's and Naess' idea of Self-realization different from Advaita Vedanta idea of Brahman (Self- realization)? In Advaita Vedanta Self-realization means attaining an elevated higher state of consciousness or deeper understanding of the nature of reality in which you realize that you are neither a thinker or a doer but pure consciousness, only existing reality (Brahman). As David Loy informs that for Shankara (the proponent of Advaita Vedanta) "no action is necessary to realize Brahman, and no action can be enjoined on one who has realized Brahman, for that realization puts an end to all activity by revealing the nondual true Self as that which never acts."[40] However, as argued above, for both Gandhi and Naess, Self-realization means intense activities and complete involvement in worldly affairs to minimize the suffering and pain of others. Both believe as also believed in Mahayana Buddhism that one's Self-realization is intrinsically linked with the Self-realization of all other living beings. Now it is evident that Mahayana Buddhist ideas of Self and Self-realization influenced both Gandhi and Naess's ideas of Self and Self-realization. And if we accept that for Mahayana Buddhism, Gandhi and Naess Self-realization involves identifying with the pain and suffering of other beings, then on the one hand, we can demonstrate Gandhi's influence on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology), and on the other hand can explain how Gandhi's and Naess's idea of Self and Self-realization are not compatible with Vedantic idea of Self and Self-realization , although both use Vedantic vocabulary to explain their idea of Self-realization.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have argued that Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) were not a little indebted to the legacy of Gandhi. Gandhi's impact was profoundly important and influenced some key concepts, such as self-realization and deep ecology. It is explained that most of the scholars have ignored Gandhi in the process of understanding different influences on Naess and his eco-philosophy (deep ecology) because they find Hindu especially Advaita Vedanta philosophy, incompatible with some of the basic concepts of Naess's eco-philosophy (deep ecology). However, it is argued that it is not proper and correct to see Gandhi as either Hindu or Vedantic to understand the influence of Gandhi on some key concepts of deep ecology. It is further explained that the influence of Gandhi on Naess is more appropriately explained and understood when Gandhi's ideas of Self and Self-realization are seen in this light of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. Unlike Advaita Vedanta philosophy, for Mahayana Buddhism, Gandhi and Naess, the suffering and pain of our fellow creatures are real, and Self-realization means consciously striving to embrace the pain and suffering of others and trying to reduce their pain and suffering.

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2. Thomas Weber, "Gandhi, Deep Ecology, Peace Research and Buddhist Economics", *Journal of Peace Research*, 32, 3 (May, 1999), pp.349-360.
3. T N Khoshoo, *Mahatma Gandhi: An Apostle of Applied Human Ecology* (New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute, 2002).
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7. Ibid., p.71.
8. Weber, *op. cit*., p. 349.
9. Thomas Weber, *Gandhi as Disciple and Mentor*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
10. Shaded Ahmed Power, *Gandhi & Deep Ecology: Experiencing the Nonhuman Environment*, Unpublished thesis.

11. Lal, *op. cit*., p. 153.
12. Deane Curtin, "A State of mind like water: Ecosophy T and the Buddhist traditions", *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy.* 39,2 (August 2008), p. 240.
13. Eccy De Jonge, *Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism* (Cornwall: Ashgate 2000), p.40.
14. Knut A Jacobsen, "Bhagavadgita, Ecosophy T, and Deep Ecology", *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 39, 2(August 2008), P.225.
15. Ibid., p.225.
16. See John Clark, "World Wild Web", *The Trumpeter*, 11, 4 (Fall 1994), p.201 and Peter Marshall, *Nature's Web: Rethinking Our Place on Earth* (New York: Paragon House 1992), p.33.
17. To understand why Gandhi's self-proclaimed faint in particular religion or sets or his choice of particular vocabulary to explain some of his ideas in the particular context cannot be taken as his testimony for his belief in that particular religion or philosophy? See Nishikant Kolge, "Was Gandhi an Adaitan, in the Classical Sense of Advaita Vedanta?", *GITAM Journal of Gandhian Studies*, 6, 1& 2, (January-December 2017), pp.208-218.
18. Some scholars have expressed their concerns and surprises over Naess's use of Hindu or Vedic or Advaita Vedanta vocabulary to explain some key concepts of deep ecology despite the fact they are not appropriate words to express the intended or inherent meaning of his key concepts. As Eccy De Jonge writes, "Where Vedic thought identifies the self with Brahman, in Naess' version the egos of individuals always remain separate. Such an interpretation contradicts the very idea of self-realization posited in Vedic thought and makes us wonder why Naess decided to use the term atman." Jonge, *op. cit*., p. 40.
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21. Margaret Chatterjee, *Gandhi's Religious Thought*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983)
22. Nicholas Gier, *The Virtue of Nonviolence: From Gautama to Gandhi*, (Albany: State University of New York Press)
23. Joseph Prabhu, "Gandhi's Religious Ethics", in The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi for the Twenty-First Century, ed. Douglas Allen (New Delhi: OUP, 2008), pp.161-178.
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31. Arne Naess, *Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, translated and edited by David Rothenberg, (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 60-61.
32. Gier, *op. cit*., p.12.
33. Arne Johan Vetlesen, "Ethics and Value in Naess' Ecophilosophy", *Worldviews, Special Issue: Deep Ecology*, 21, 3, (2017), p.261.
34. Bose, *op. cit*., p.150.
35. Prabhu, *op. cit*., P.169.
36. M K Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Volume 84 (CWMG)* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, November 1981), p. 437.
37. See Nishikant Kolge & N Sreekumar, "Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Gandhi's Concept of Swaraj: Some Critical Thoughts on Parel's Reading of Swaraj", in *Reflections on Hindi Swaraj*, eds Siby K Joseph and Bharat Mahodaya (Wardha: IGS & Gandhi International, France, 2010), p. 190.
38. Jonge, *op. cit*., p. 40.
39. See Eric Katz, "Against the Inevitability of Anthropocentrism" in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, eds Eric Katz, Andrew Light and David Rothenberg, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), p. 38.
40. David Loy, "The Path of No-Path: Sankara and Dogen on the Paradox of Practice", *Philosophy East and West*, 38,3 (April 1988), p. 130.

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Book Reviews

B. Sambasiva Prasad, Gandhian Perspective on Economics and Ethics, Suryodaya Books, 2024, ISBN: 9789392443138, Price: Rs. 600.

This book results from a two-year senior fellowship awarded by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR). The author has long experience as director of the Centre of Gandhian Studies and the Gitam Journal of Gandhian Studies editor. The book is based on the papers on Economics and Ethics published by the author in well-known Journals. These papers attracted readers to learn more about this theme, and the present book has aptly satisfied this goal due to the substantial content with analysis not available elsewhere.

This well-designed book aims to explore the ethical foundation of the Gandhian economic order and discuss its relevance in modern times. The methodology followed in this work is historical, analytic, and comparative. The present study is based on "The original source of data" collected from Gandhi's writings, discourses, and personal communications found in the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. The second source of data on Gandhian economics was collected from the various studies and appropriately analyzed, compared, and critically evaluated.

The most impressive aspect of the book is that it runs into thirteen chapters, from the introduction to the conclusion, covers all relevant aspects of the theme, and each of the chapters is very well linked up. Integrated Introduction is very interesting and useful in terms of classical economics and Gandhi's positive economics/political economics. The lucid presentation deserves appreciation as the author do not belong to discipline of Economics, but he has shown reasonable maturity of scholarship in dealing with complex and critical issues in economics. The next chapter on 'Ethics' is his forte, and we expect to have depth and detail on the concept of ethics and economics and their relevance. And to a large extent, the author has dealt with ethics well. The chapter has explored the core of the Gandhian economic

order in ethics. True economics, good economics, man-centric economics, ethical economics, moral economics, and such various terms are coined for Gandhian economics. Then, seven principles of Gandhian economics based on "Non-violence" make the point clear that Gandhian economics was built on ethics.

Just as "Concept of Economic man versus ideal man" of Gandhi provided a link to ethics, in the next chapter, in a similar way, all the topics such as Swaraj, Swadeshi, Bread Labour, Non-possession, Trusteeship, Social Ownership, Sarvodaya, Constructive Programme, Decentralized economy. Gandhi's critique of Industrial Civilization, Economy of Permanence and last an estimate of Gandhian economic order are discussed. All are well linked up to get a holistic perception of Gandhi on economics and its ethical basis.

Thus, the book provides useful material for understanding economics and ethics. However, there are some points where better treatment would have enriched the value of the book:

1. Gandhian economics is regarded not as economics but as a political economy needs to be explained in detail.
2. The concepts of ethics, morality, and spirituality need clarification.
3. What is an estimate of economic order? Gandhi prescribed Social Order (including economic order). 'The social order' is unique, and the ultimate outcome of the Gandhian thought could have been dealt with in a much better way.
4. The study could have discussed some of the most well-known works on Gandhian thoughts, say (1) Rajmohan Gandhi (2) Sriman Narayan (3) Narayan Desai (4) Bhikhu Parekh (5)(6) Narhari Parikh (5) Subhash Sharma, among others.
5. The best model of application of Gandhian economics with its ethical value is provided by several stalwarts like (1) Ila Bhatt (SEWA) (2), Dr. Kurien (Amul), and (3) Manibhai Desai (BAYAF). Some others have followed but are lesser known. The inclusion of this kind of evidence could have explained the relevance of Gandhian economics in perhaps more meaningful ways.

These are some points that could have been included, but no work is complete. However, this study is valuable for researchers and general readers in Gandhian Studies and general social sciences.

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M. K. Gandhi, Poorna Swaraj: *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*, Introduced by Dhananjay Rai, Penguin Vintage, 2023, ISBN 9780670098279, 280 Pages, 599 (hardcover)

M.K. Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. Therein he argued that India had lost its freedom to the British because of its loss of moral and spiritual power. Swaraj, for Gandhi, was more than political independence. It involved spiritual, moral, political, social, and economic freedom. In 1941, Gandhi wrote *Constructive Programme*. This book, he claimed, provided "the truthful and non-violent way of winning Poorna Swaraj". Gandhi designed the programme "to build up the nation from the very bottom upward". It focussed on issues like communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, khadi, other village industries, village sanitation, new or basic education, adult education, women, education in health and hygiene, provincial languages, national language, economic equality, kisans, labour, adivasis, lepers, and students. The text claimed that if followed sincerely, the programme would train people to practice civil disobedience, which was to be offered sparingly. The book in review presents Gandhi's *Constructive Programme* with an "Introduction", an "Afterword", and a comprehensive section providing notes on the aforementioned items of the Programme.

Liberal democracy possesses an inherent disinterestedness or indifference to people's real participation. In the working of liberal democracies across the Globe, people are mobilised by political parties. Real participation is not encouraged. There is a contradiction in liberal democracy. Political or moral equality is there. However, this is not accompanied by socio-economic equality. To put it differently, socio-economic equality is not a procedural requirement for liberal democracy. Because of this contradiction, liberal democracies have become more procedural than substantive.

Dhananjay Rai engages with this problem in Poorna Swaraj, which presents an annotated version of Gandhi's *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*. He argues that the *Constructive Programme* bridges the gap between political equality and socio-economic inequality. Reading this text can also help address the prevalent problem of prioritising mobilisation over participation in liberal democracies. Rai makes a three-fold categorisation of various Gandhi texts. In the category of, what he calls major texts, Rai puts *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (1909/1910), *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1928), and *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927/1929/1940). *Constructive Programme* is put in the category called "immanent text". The remaining writings by Gandhi are categorised as

"fragmentary" writings. These fragmentary writings are extensions or reflections of major texts. Rai claims that the ruling class, including the political right, has appropriated and celebrated the "Gandhi discourse as an unflinching signature of native greatness" (p. LXXI). In reading the Gandhi discourse, there is a focus on the major texts, argues Rai. The major texts offer a utopia or ideal without any suggested concrete measure to achieve the utopia. *Constructive Programme,* which is an "immanent text", has been ignored deliberately because of its potential "to create the political space and political subject immediately during the imminent crippling of the structure from within" (p. LXXVIII). Rai distinguishes between "philosophy proper" and "philosophy practical" when reading Gandhi's texts. He claims that the "major texts" are a manifestation of "philosophy proper", and the immanent text is the expression of "philosophy practical". Rai submits that although a holistic reading of Gandhi requires the perusal of all three types of Gandhian writings, we have ignored the *Constructive Programme*.

Rai argues that immanent text contravenes the liberal political theory or statist discourse. Immanent text is very important because of its focus on "the extraparliamentary". It stresses immediacy. Contradictions of liberal democracy are engaged with an immanent text, such as the *Constructive Programme*. An immanent text never tries to silence the contradictions. Rai claims, "One of Gandhi's crucial and perhaps forgotten ideas is the extraparliamentary postulation which questions the sublime rigidities of institutions" (p. LXXIX). Rai thinks that "liberalism and illiberalism can coexist" (p. LXXIX). The paradox of liberal democracy is reflected in its "constrictive tendency" which normalises illiberal practices such as "fundamentalism, violence, communalism, caste atrocities, gendering, and exploitation". Rai submits that the reading *Constructive Programme* as a statement of the extraparliamentary offers the opportunity to counter and reject the constrictive tendency of liberal political theory/ liberalism/ liberal democracy.

As Rai points out, the idea of 'the exparliamentary' is linked with "social movements or activities associated with non-state actors" (p. LXXX). He uses the concept in a way that does not require the extraparliamentary to work in isolation from parliamentary politics. Rather, it aims to improve politics by "exposing serious limitations" of parliamentary politics. For Rai, 'the extraparliamentary' is "political everydayness for transformation" (p. LXXXI). He says, "parliamentary activities cannot be robust without extraparliamentary activities" (p. 61). As pointed out by Rai, it was E.M.S. Namboodiripad who "used 'extraparliamentary activity' for the constructive programme" (p. 60).

According to Rai, *Constructive Programme* provides the reader with the "idea of permanent opportunity for politics". It also gives room for "inclusion of a non-authorised (heterodox) version of politics." In Rai's words, *Constructive Programme* becomes crucial for "rejecting the constrictive programme of politics …". The perusal of the text offers a solution to the liberal problem of not giving opportunity for "manifestation of politics". Liberal politics defines some "authorised" and "authenticated voice" as the means to manifest politics. The book convincingly argues that *Constructive Programme* as an expression of the "extraparliamentary in the form of political action in those areas which are not even considered sites of political action" (p. LXXI). Rai argues that liberal democracy designates some places as institutionalised political action spaces. It also treats the mass "*only* available for mobilising without realizing the significance of participation". Because of its stress on extraparliamentary politics, Rai claims that Constructive Program offers "de-definite political space" and "de-constrained representation" in response to the liberal paradox manifested in definite political space and constrained representation. This is not to reject parliamentary politics but to complement it with expanding politics and political space.

There were so many well-researched works on Gandhi's other texts, such as *Hind Swaraj,* and *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth.* For example 1997, Anthony Parel published an annotated version of *Hind Swaraj* and some other selected writings. In that book titled *Gandhi: Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, Parel wrote a very long introduction to *Hind Swaraj*. An abridged version of *Constructive Programme* was also included in that book. However, the book focussed mainly on *Hind Swaraj*. There were not many books solely devoted to *Constructive Programme*. Rai's book fills the void. It is very similar to Parel's book on *Hind Swaraj.* However, there is a major difference between Parel's and Rai's approaches. Parel's book restricts the discussion to Gandhi's text only. Rai goes beyond that. In addition to discussing *Constructive Programme,* he emphasises the importance of the text in the present time. He locates the text in the context of liberal democracy.

Rai adds a long introduction of 88 pages, an 'Afterword' of 38 pages, and 'Notes' of 93 pages to the relatively smaller original text *Constructive Programme*, which occupies 49 pages in Rai's book. The purpose of giving here the details of the number of pages of different sections of the book is to accentuate the in-depth research that Rai has done on the original text by Gandhi. He has not left any item in the *Constructive Programme* untouched in the section notes of the book. This section is well-researched and comprehensive. In its Introduction,

this book gives a biographical account of *Constructive Programme*. It traces the origin of the 'constructive programme' idea to the 1920s. Gandhi kept on experimenting with the programme. He reflected, spoke and wrote on many occasions before finally publishing Constructive Programme in 1941, revised in 1944, 1945, and 1948. Rai has done a commendable work in chronicling the development of the idea of the constructive programme at different stages. He also compares the changes in different words as appeared in the first publication of *Constructive Programme* and its subsequent revisions. A similarity may be found here with Tridip Suhrud's approach to reading *Hind Swaraj* and *An Autobiography.*

In Rai's book, the Afterword section discusses Constructive Programme's afterlif*e*. It discusses several "critical and enthusiastic responses" garnered by the original text by Gandhi. Rai engages with the views by Arne Naess, Judith Brown, Bhikhu Parekh, Ajit K. Dasgupta, David Hardiman, Thomas Weber, Ronald Terchek, Richard Johnson, Dennis Dalton, Tridip Suhrud, Anthony Parel, Anuradha Veeravalli, M.V. Naidu, K.N. Pannikar, Karuna Mantenna, Bindu Mathew, R. Srivatsan, and E.M.S. Namboodiripad. This is very comprehensive and thus helpful for further research on the *Constructive Programme*. In engaging with liberal political theory, Rai discusses the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, J.S. Mill, John Rawls, Charles Larmore, Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, Anne Philips, Irish Marion Young, and E.M. Wood. In discussing the extraparliamentary, 'party-less democracy', 'non-party politics', and participatory democracy, Rai engages with the works of Robert Michels, Maurice Duverger, Jayaprakash Narayan, Atul Kohli, D.L. Sheth, Rajni Kothari, Neera Chandhoke, and Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The book sincerely tries to establish that the present model of liberal democracy offers a very constrained vision of politics. As envisaged in Gandhi's Constructive Programme, this lacuna can be addressed by participatory and/or extraparliamentary politics.

Rai's effort, as Gopal Guru writes, in the section on advance praise for the book, "merits attention". Bhikhu Parekh rightly says this book "makes an impressive contribution to Gandhian studies and deserves a warm welcome". To conclude the review, it can be said that anybody interested in *Constructive Programme,* in particular, and Gandhian thought in general, will find Rai's book of immense help. It is an invaluable contribution to Gandhi studies. The book is also a timely intervention in liberal political theory. It is all the more relevant for the present political scenario because it engages with the problems of liberal democracy.

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Relevant Quotes of Gandhi in the context of the Ram Lalla consecration

It is not necessary for any Hindu to go to a temple to worship (the image of) Ramachandra. But it is for him who cannot contemplate his Rama without looking at his image in a temple.It may be unfortunate, but it is true that his Rama resides in that temple as nowhere else. I would not disturb that simple faith.

…There is no question of comparison between the darshan and the deed. If there was, I would unhesitatingly say that the deed is better. But the function of darshan is to enable the deed to be done, to steady and purify the soul. Thus, darshan is not a substitute for right doing. It is an encouragement for it.

I laugh within myself, when someone objects that Rama or the chanting of Ramanama is for the Hindus only, (and asks) how can Mussalmans, therefore, take part in it. Is there one God for the Mussalmans and another for the Hindus, Parsis or Christians? No, there is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God.

My Rama, the Rama of our prayers, is not the historical Rama, the son of Dasaratha, the King of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship, His aid alone I seek, and so should you. He belongs equally to all. I t, therefore, see no reason why a Mussalman or anybody should object to taking His name. But he is in no way bound to recognize God as Ramanama. He may utter to himself Allah or Khuda so as not to mar the harmony of the sound.

Jyotirmaya Sharma, Elusive Nonviolence: The Making and Unmaking of Gandhi's Religion of Ahimsa, Chennai: Context, 2021. ISBN 9789390679607, pp. 271. Price Rs. 699.

Elusive Nonviolence is primarily a book on violence and nonviolence with unavoidable references to Gandhi. Sharma's Gandhi is a modern interpreter and reformer of Hinduism whose mission was to carefully place the religion of ahimsa at the core of the Hindu self-image. The book is divided into five chapters, along with an introduction by the author. Each chapter's titles carry its essence and reflect the originality and clarity of the scholarly product. In the introduction, the author argues that Gandhi's version of nonviolence was a uniquely new idea and cannot be read back to past traditions. Sharma writes that ahimsa in Gandhi was neither entirely a modern enterprise nor a purely nationalist enterprise (p.8). The introduction also hints that Sharma's Gandhi is not unquestionable. It discusses challenges to Gandhi's formulation of nonviolence by Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh, Ambedkar, and Martin Buber.

The murder of Swami Shraddhanand by Abdul Rashid and Gandhi's response to it is the plot of chapter one. Sharma carefully reads Gandhi's reactions to the murder and later debates on it between Gandhi and his interlocutors. Gandhi's refusal to mourn, fascination with the greatness of death and martyrdom, concerns with retaliatory violence between religious communities, and representation of violence in the subject and object sides of the incident are extensively discussed in this chapter. Sharma also brings readers back to the differences between Gandhi and Shraddhanand regarding the centrality of nonviolence in the former's method of satyagraha. Sharma calls Gandhi's declaration that truth and nonviolence is the Hindu creed as his 'most audacious and significant political move'. For Gandhi, the core of all religions preached peace, but nonviolence was unique to Hinduism (p.81). Sharma finds that the primacy of ahimsa as a non-negotiable article of faith was the unique contribution of Gandhi in reconstructing the nineteenth-century Hindu self-image. He alludes to Gandhi's selective picking up of features from sacred canons to support this 'most ambitious and original political act'. To introduce truth and ahimsa as part of the daily practical life of Hindus was a deliberate attempt of Gandhi.

Chapter two is on Gandhi's historical unfolding of the epochs and trials through which Hinduism passed. Among these, Islam's coming to India was a complex and confusing chapter for Gandhi. Sharma's nuanced reading exposes how Gandhi managed to balance between narratives on Islam in Indian history. "For Gandhi, Islam in

India was not just a 'trial' for Hinduism nor was it another epochal moment for the faith. It was a 'commotion'" (p.101). This chapter also discusses Gandhi's search for meeting points between Hindus and Muslims in India. Gandhi perceived Hindu-Muslim strife as primarily religious. He put the burden of ensuring nonviolence and tolerance in these disputes on Hindus. The chapter also deals with Gandhi's position on cow protection, intermarriage, inter-dining, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Sharma proved the art of solving puzzles in ambiguous positions of Gandhi on critical issues, which otherwise reduced as mere contradictions. Chapter three deals with Gandhi's methodology in reading Hindu texts. It exposes the ways in which Gandhi interpreted texts to align with his religious mission. Gandhi rejected instructions in shastras that go against principles of truth and nonviolence. Hence, he celebrated the yardstick of reason for reading sacred canons. Sharma characterizes Gandhi's interface with Hindu scriptures as 'selective, inconsistent and capricious'. He discusses the consequences of not recognizing paradoxes in Gandhi's primacy purpose of attaining moksha for oneself and restoring Hinduism to its original majesty. That's why the nationalist dimension disproportionately accentuated over Gandhi's audacious principal task of interpreting Hinduism (p.135). Sharma unravels ambiguities in Gandhi's ambivalent positions on caste and untouchability by properly placing them in historical and political contexts. He shows how Gandhi transmuted political problems into religious concerns. He argues that Gandhi categorically introduced truth and nonviolence exclusively and distinctly as Hinduism's fundamental principles. Sharma tags this restatement of Hinduism as 'arbitrary, disjointed and contradictory'.

Gandhi's questioning of the historical validity of nonviolence in India in letters with C F Andrews is discussed in chapter four. Paradoxically, Gandhi highlighted the absence of nonviolence in Hindu canons. Sharma argues that in responding to Andrews, Gandhi resurrected the things he might otherwise have rejected as interpolations in the sacred texts. Gandhi also set the development of physical strength as a condition for appreciating the merits of nonviolence. This chapter also explores Gandhi's perceptions of violence. Sharma argues that even when Gandhi shifted from conventional ways of seeing violence, the question of manliness, qualities of soldier, and power to punish remain inextricably linked to his discussions on violence. This chapter further discusses Gandhi's definitions of violence, brute force and nonviolence. It also alludes to Gandhi's exposition of Hindu self in which violence was 'external and distant'. Sharma writes that the acceptance of ahimsa was non-negotiable for Gandhi to call India motherland (p.207). The final

chapter is on Gandhi's commentaries on Gita. For him, Gita's central theme was the inner spiritual fight between good and evil. It had nothing to do with earthly warfare. It was a text on moksha and duty than nonviolence. Selfless action was its central message. Sharma finds roots of relative nonviolence in Gandhi by locating arguments that substantiate the impossibility in attaining perfect ahimsa. This may help readers to clarify criticisms of Gandhi's nonviolence as absolute by his contemporaries. Sharma also gets into the challenging task of examining the idea of death in Indian traditions to explain Gandhi's rhapsody about death. This chapter problematizes the general prisms of noncooperation and satyagraha through which Gandhi's formulation of ahimsa is seen. Eventually, Sharma concludes his project of unfolding Gandhi's religion of ahimsa by equating it with raga in Indian musical tradition, which has an ascending and descending scale. The ascending sense of ahimsa stresses nonviolent action and violent and nonviolent actors, whereas the descending range characterize it as an inward quality (p.242). When both come together, the descending range would be dominant, but neither would the whole. He further argues that ideas of moksha, desireless action, futility of body and centrality of death are inseparable from Gandhi's establishment of ahimsa as a fundamental principle of Hinduism. Gandhi believed that, like any religious ideal, the religion of ahimsa could not be entirely realized in the flesh. Sharma's expositions on Gandhi's religion of ahimsa also help general readers understand the paradox of appropriating Gandhi's instruments, like fasting unto death, for instrumental needs.

Like his previous books, Sharma's fascination with ideas and comparatively less preoccupation with political images and personalities is the continuing hallmark of The Elusive Nonviolence. The glossary and index are helpful to students of Gandhian thought. The carefully prepared and selected bibliography is a ready reference for those scholars who engage with Gandhi seriously. The book is recommendable to students of Gandhian thought, peace studies, Indian political thought, and political science. Gandhi's nonviolence is elusive, but Sharma's original academic account of it would be palpable even for ordinary readers. It is free from all kinds of academic exhibitionism. Moreover, it teaches us how to read an original text.

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Information for Authors

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Examples

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

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

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

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