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Editorial

THE NEWS OF the brutal rape and murder of a woman doctor in a Kolkata hospital made headlines on August 9, 2024, shocking the country once more. People throughout the nation, including resident physicians, erupted in protest as the media revealed the gory details of the crime and the working conditions of doctors. And they were correct to do so. In the most dehumanising way possible, their coworker—a fellow citizen—was attacked and killed. Due to the frequent violent attacks they endure while performing their duties in hospitals, doctors have been calling for more safety measures for several years.

However, what transpired on August 9, 2024, and the lackadaisical manner in which it was dealt with even drew the ire of the Supreme Court. More resident physicians are speaking out against abusive work environments where harassment, bullying, and ragging by coworkers, seniors, teachers, and patients' relatives are commonplace. But the problem today isn't just with the bad working conditions; it is also with the ongoing structural abuse that women and children nationwide continue to experience. The hospital appeared to have made a brazen attempt to conceal the crime to shield itself from the stigma associated with workplace rape. The truth came to light only after the girl's parents, citing the state of her body, insisted that the case be looked into as a potential murder.

The tragic story of Dr. Vandana Das in Kerala, who was fatally attacked on May 10, 2023, is echoed by the current wave of protests. A drug addict brought to Kottarakkara Government Taluk Hospital by the police repeatedly stabbed Dr. Das, a 25-year-old house surgeon, with surgical instruments. A relative of the attacker was also hurt in the vicious attack, along with multiple police officers. Dr. Das became the first medical professional to be murdered in Kerala when she was stabbed 17 times, suffering serious wounds to her chest and lung.

The Kerala government amended the Kerala Healthcare Service Persons and Healthcare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence

and Damage to Property) Act, 2012, by ordinance in response to this horrifying incident. This law required hospitals to conduct biannual security audits and imposed a number of safety requirements, such as installing closed-circuit television systems and police outposts. Despite these initiatives, serious doubts persist about successfully executing these protocols.

The selective release of the Hema Committee Report was another development that Kerala experienced during this time. The report was prompted by the Women in Cinema Collective's (WCC) activism following the 2017 kidnapping and sexual assault of a film artist at the command of a prominent actor. The Information Commission ordered the report's release even though it was submitted in 2019. With multiple other women coming forward to testify in public about their painful experiences, the revelations demonstrated how young actors had to give sexual favours (casting couch) to advance in the industry. It also discussed how women and other up-coming artists cannot succeed in the industry without the support of an all-male power group. The report highlighted the working conditions of the junior artists in the industry and their vulnerability.

As per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, it is mandatory to establish Internal Complaint Committees (ICCs). Resolving workplace sexual harassment complaints falls under the purview of an ICC. Following the Nirbhaya case, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was amended to include the death penalty, further tightening the already severe law. However, strict criminal laws are not a complete answer.

Because of the social stigma attached to sexual harassment incidents, female employees are less likely to report these incidents. Some even worry that their employers, managers, or coworkers will take revenge. Therefore, those in positions of authority must support their colleagues in reporting inappropriate activity or sexual harassment at work by utilising a formal complaint process. Supervisors and managers can receive separate training to help them recognise the warning signs of sexual harassment and why they should try to stop it.

We are happy to present five articles and two book reviews to the readers in this issue.

JOHN S. MOOLAKKATTU
Chief Editor

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Gandhi and Titus: Dairying, Dandi and Dreams of India

Teresa Joseph
A.M. Thomas

ABSTRACT

Theverthundiyil Titus was one among the 78 satyagrahis who set forth from Sabarmati Ashram with Mahatma Gandhi on the Dandi Yatra. As the dairy manager of the Ashram, he closely interacted with Gandhi during the period of over five years that he lived there. Gandhi's association with Titus can be assimilated from the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi as well as Titus' oral accounts as narrated by his son Thomas Titus, and the books authored separately by both father and son. This article attempts to throw light on a brief chapter in the lives of Gandhi and Titus, providing yet another vantage point to understand the various facets of Gandhi's life and philosophy, as well as the writing of history.

Key words: *Theverthundiyil Titus, Sabarmati Ashram, Dandi Yatra, Dairying, Goseva*

Introduction

AS ONE OF THE satyagrahis who participated in the Dandi Yatra from Sabarmati Ashram, the image of Theverthundiyil Titus (1905 – 1980) can be seen in the iconic Gyara Murthi sculpture on Sardar Patel Marg in New Delhi. Signifying the Salt March, the sculpture depicts Gandhi walking with a stick followed by ten satyagrahis from different walks of life. Notably Titus was the only Christian among the 78 satyagrahis. As the dairy manager of the Ashram, he had closely interacted with Gandhi and references to him as well as several letters

written to him by Gandhi can be found in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. These interactions as well as Titus' own book *The Bharat of My Dreams: A Prediction of the Shape of Things to Come, as Visualised as a Dream of the Common Man*, and his reflections on his life with Gandhi as retold by his son Thomas Titus provide insights into an understanding of Gandhi and the creation of history.

Theverthundiyil Titus

Titus was born into the Theverthundiyil Molumprathu family which belonged to the Mar Thoma Syrian Christian community, in the village of Maramon in Kerala, in 1905. His son Thomas Titus narrates that his father pursued his education in an English medium school from the eighth standard onwards and was reportedly good in his studies, particularly in the English language. He wanted to pursue his education after matriculation, but for financial reasons, his father insisted that he get himself a job. At the age of sixteen he became a teacher at a school about twenty miles away, where he was also provided food and accommodation, in return for providing tuition to the children of the manager of the school. His older brother had inculcated in him the importance of religion and of reading the Bible. He also ingrained in him the significance of reading the newspaper and introduced him to Mahatma Gandhi who had returned from South Africa and had started the Non-Cooperation Movement.[1]

A few years later when the Allahabad Agricultural Institute (run by the Presbyterian Mission) announced a new course titled the Indian Dairy Diploma, Titus applied and subsequently joined the course with a scholarship and free accommodation. He worked part time in the institute in order to meet his other personal needs. He received his diploma in 1927, but continued to stay in the hostel as he was unable to find appropriate employment. He began writing articles on agriculture and dairying which were published by *The Pioneer*, for which he received a payment of five rupees for each article. Titus' son points out that it was difficult to get a job as in those times scientific breeding of cattle or dairy development was not common in India. However, when the Manager of the Institute's dairy farm was found in an inebriated condition in public, his services were terminated and the Principal immediately appointed Titus as the new manager. Due to its mismanagement, the sales of the farm had decreased, and there was a huge quantity of surplus milk, which needed to be transformed into byproducts. Titus worked hard in this position for two years and succeeded in making the dairy profitable. However, the position of his immediate superior was soon taken over by Hansen, a missionary who according to Titus, was inexperienced and "had all the superiority

complexes of a white skinned man."[2] His son points out that Titus by nature resented any foreigner dominating over him. He resisted Hansen's instructions, and soon resigned from his job despite the pleas of the Principal.

Unemployed again, he returned to writing articles for *The Pioneer* and reading aloud the newspaper to a visually challenged Englishman for a payment. In 1928 he was appointed by an Anglo-Indian contractor as Manager of the Railway Dairy Farm at Gorakhpur. About a year later, his brother informed him of Gandhi having advertised for a dairy expert in Sabarmati Ashram and of having sent in an application on his behalf.[3]

Gandhi, Cow Protection and Dairying

On his return from South Africa, Gandhi had set up the Satyagraha Ashram in Kochrab in Ahmedabad in 1915. However, he felt that an Ashram without an orchard, farm or cattle would not be complete and in 1917 the Ashram was shifted to a 36-acre site on the banks of the River Sabarmati and came to be known as the Sabarmati Ashram. By 1928 it consisted of about 132 acres with 277 residents.[4] Gandhi lived here until the Dandi Yatra of 1930, and besides his well-known interventions in the national arena; he paid particular attention, to questions of cow protection/service, co-operative farming and dairying. But his interest in cow protection/service had emerged much earlier and needs to be seen in the context of his overarching principle of ahimsa.

He wrote in the weekly journal *Young India,* of which he was the editor, that cow protection takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to him symbolised the entire subhuman world and its protection meant the "protection of the whole dumb creation of God."[5] He also argued that cow slaughter was very often the cause of Hindu-Muslim tensions. Gandhi specifically listed methods by which the cow could be saved from being killed once it ceased to provide the required quantity of milk or otherwise became an economic burden. For him, behind this lay the principle of ahimsa. Gandhi gradually replaced the words 'goraksha' (cow protection) with 'goseva' (cow service) as he felt that the word goraksha reflected a sense of human pride, although man himself was incompetent to protect and was in need of protection by God, the protector of all life. In 1927 he was elected as Chairman of the All India Cow Protection Association.[6]

Gandhi explained that Sabarmati Ashram believed in goseva, which stood for the service of all sub-human life. The children in the Ashram were also given training in cattle rearing and dairy farming.[7] Gandhi had become particularly interested in dairying during his stay in

Bangalore in June 1927 while convalescing from apoplexy.[8] He regularly visited the National Imperial Dairy Research Institute and became acquainted with breeding cows and dairy technology. He studiously took notes during these visits and wrote extensively on cow breeding in *Young India*.

Titus: Satyagraha Ashram's Dairy Manager

It is in this background that one needs to understand Gandhi's interactions with Titus. In response to the application submitted by his brother, Titus was called for an interview at Sabarmati Ashram. On reaching the Ashram, he was escorted to a room where Gandhi was seated on the floor with his spinning wheel. Continuing to spin, Gandhi stated that he wanted Titus, as an expert dairy manager, to take charge of the Ashram dairy and manage it scientifically and hygienically. The milk was to meet the needs of 250 inmates of the Ashram. Besides the dairy work, Titus was informed that he would also have to help in the kitchen for two hours a day, and wash all the toilets whenever his turn came. In response to Titus' question about whether he would receive a salary, Gandhi stated that in the Ashram all were equal and all expenses would be met from the common fund. Only vegetarian food could be handled and consumed. When Titus pointed out that he needed to send his father some money, Gandhi asked for his name and address, stating that he would make arrangements for some money to be sent to him every month. Gandhi further informed him that he would have to observe celibacy while staying in the Ashram. Titus again queried as to whether this had to be observed throughout his life, to which Gandhi responded that after a few years he would be sent to do dairy development work in other places, where there would not be such a restriction. But in the Ashram, even married couples slept separately.[9]

Gandhi considered brahmacharya to be a sine qua non for a life devoted to service and defined a brahmachari as "one who controls his organs of sense in thought, word and deed."[10] For him brahmacharya was a complete mastery or restraint of all the senses, not mere abstention from sexual intercourse. He felt that "those who want to perform national service, or those who want to have a glimpse of the real religious life, must lead a celibate life, no matter if married or unmarried."[11] Psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson relates Gandhi's views with his feelings of guilt about fulfilling his sexual needs at the time of the demise of his father. This incident inculcated in Gandhi the belief that his sexual activities were in conflict with his duty to nurse others.[12] Rudolph and Rudolph argue that he generalized this belief over time into the view that a life governed by desire conflicts with

one governed by duty.[13]

Titus asked for a few days' time to take a decision, to which Gandhi readily agreed, advising him to visit the goshala before leaving. A few days later, Titus sent a letter of acceptance to Gandhi stating that he would join after a period of one month which he required to visit his family. Titus joined the Ashram on 20 October 1929, and was given a short haircut, khadi clothes, a charka, plate, katori and glass. His routine began at 3.00 a.m. when he had to get the cows milked and then record the quantity and purity of the milk, before proceeding with the distribution. All inmates of the Ashram were considered equal and shared all responsibilities. Spinning was a compulsory daily activity and the quantity of spun material was recorded to see if the spinner was sincere in his task.[14]

Life in the Ashram was clearly reflective of that in the Phoenix Settlement which Gandhi had set up in South Africa after reading John Ruskin's *Unto This Last,* being influenced by the ideas of simple living and equality of labour that the book expounded. After his return to India, spinning and the use of khadi came to symbolise an alternative economic and political system.

Titus' son, Thomas Titus recalls an incident narrated by his father, about a love letter between two inmates reaching Gandhi's hands. He was shocked at the violation of the Ashram rules and after the evening prayers, he spoke on questions of morality. He felt that such behaviour was taking place due to his own sins, and stated that if this was if repeated, he would immolate himself! However, according to Titus such activities continued furtively.[15] This is again reflective of experiences in Phoenix Settlement and Tolstoy Farm, and the manner in which Gandhi handled such situations.

In 1929 with the strengthening of the freedom struggle, the management of the dairy was made independent of Sabarmati Ashram, to insulate it from the problems of the Ashram. Yet Gandhi continued to be very interested in the activities of the dairy and came to be closely associated with Titus, reportedly sending his father Rs. 5/- every month and writing to inform him that his son was doing well.[16] Titus in turn, became attracted to the freedom struggle. He was sometimes witness to discussions on the struggle and the future course of action with regard to the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Dandi Yatra

It was at this juncture that the Dandi Yatra against the Salt Act which prohibited Indians from making salt, was being conceptualised by Gandhi as part of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi deemed the Salt Act to be a perfect example of colonial exploitation and the

Salt Satyagraha proved to be a defining moment of the freedom struggle. Once it was decided upon, there was difficulty in choosing the first batch of satyagrahis, as many people including leaders from different parts of India were eager to enlist themselves. There were nearly 200 inmates in Sabarmati Ashram itself.[17] Gandhi made it clear in *Young India* of 27 February 1930 that his intention was "to start the movement only through the inmates of the Ashram and those who have submitted to its discipline and assimilated the spirit of its methods."[18] He further warned that only those who were bold enough to risk their lives during the satyagraha should continue in the Ashram, and that those who wanted to leave could do so with his permission. Several members left the next day. Some of them advised Titus also to do so. However, according to his son, Titus wrote to Gandhi: "I am not as perfect as you expect, but every day I endeavour to follow your footsteps and try to get closer to perfection. I entrust myself to God's hands. If you are not satisfied, please permit me to leave." According to Thomas Titus, Gandhi replied: "I only want you all to make daily efforts to achieve perfection. I am happy that you are all trying your best. Join me for the Dandi March."[19]

Interestingly, although women in the Ashram expressed their desire to join the march, Gandhi felt that it would be cowardice for men to have women accompany them as the British do not attack women. He further stated that "there are certain activities which are meant only for women. Prohibition and boycott of foreign cloth are such activities."[20] No women were included among the 78 satyagrahis, but ironically, it was the Non Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movements that played a pivotal role in drawing women into the public sphere in India.

Several days before the march, a few children in the Ashram were afflicted with small pox. Doctors advised Gandhi to get all the inmates vaccinated. However, on realising that the anti viral vaccine was extracted from cows, he opposed the idea and informed the inmates that those who had no faith in him could go outside the Ashram and get vaccinated. However, according to Thomas Titus, his father and many others remained in the Ashram without getting vaccinated.[21]

At a prayer meeting at the Ashram on 12 March, Gandhi revealed that he had taken a pledge not to return to the Ashram until independence was achieved, calling upon all the inmates also "to return here only as dead men or winners of swaraj."[22]

Mahadev Desai, who served as Gandhi's personal secretary, published in *Young India* of 12 March 1930, a list of the first batch of 79 satyagrahis including Gandhi who were to set forth on the Dandi Yatra from Sabarmati Ashram. This list is followed by a section titled

"Who's Who" wherein he provides a very brief description of each one of them. He points out that as most of them were ashram inmates, religious, caste and provincial boundaries had no significance. However, he reveals that the list specifies the community, province and occupation of each marcher which had been prepared purely for this publication. The entry for Titus reads: "Christian, Diploma of the Indian Dairy Department, Worker in Cow Service Association."[23] Desai points out that there were two Muslims and one Christian in the group, the remaining being Hindus. Titus was the only Christian among them.

This list from *Young India* was reproduced in Appendix II of volume 43 of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* with due acknowledgement of the source but not the author. It denotes 4 persons, all aged 25, from the present state of Kerala as – Raghavanji, Titusji, Krishna Nair, and Sankaran.[24] (Their full names being N.P.Raghavan, a student of khadi; C.Krishnan Nair, a graduate of Jamia Milia Islamia and student of khadi; and Sankaran Ezhuthachan, a student of khadi). Most literature on Titus, including government sources, maintain that he was given the honorific title Titusji by Gandhi who called him so.[25] However, the above-mentioned list is the only place in the *Collected Works* which refers to Titus as Titusji, and notably this list was taken from *Young India* and had been created and published by Mahadev Desai. None of Gandhi's letters or references to Titus in the *Collected Works* refer to him as Titusji, but rather as Titus. The only deviation from this being a letter to Shankerlal Banker in September 1933, wherein Gandhi refers to Titus as 'Bhai Titus'.[26]

Titus participated in the Salt March with Gandhi, walking over three weeks to reach the seaside village of Dandi and break the salt law. Unlike the other marchers, he did not wear the Gandhi topi during the march. Although complaints arose, Gandhi responded that he could not compel Titus to do so as he himself did not wear one. Titus recalled that when his feet became swollen and painful, Gandhi advised him on how to alleviate the pain. If anyone fell ill, they were left behind and if possible had to catch up later with the others. But they were not permitted to return to the Ashram having vowed not to do so until India got independence. The march was treated as a pilgrimage, with everyone maintaining strict discipline, eating frugal food provided by the villagers and sleeping in the open, besides continuing with their mandatory spinning and prayers. At Dandi, Titus, together with others fetched buckets full of sea water and boiled it till the water evaporated and white layers of salt remained. They were severely beaten up and arrested. Titus was imprisoned for six months in the prisons at Yervada, Nasik and Jalali.[27]

Gandhi, Titus and Sabarmati

Following the Dandi Yatra, as well as spells of imprisonment, and travels across the country as well as abroad – to London, France and Italy, Gandhi shifted his residence to Wardha in Maharashtra, at the invitation of Jamnalal Bajaj. This was in keeping with his resolve not to return to Sabarmati Ashram until India attained independence. Notwithstanding the list of marchers in which Titus is mentioned, no communication between Gandhi and Titus or any mention of Titus can be found in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* until after the Dandi Yatra.

Gandhi's first written reference to Theverthundyil Titus, found in the *Collected Works* is a reply to a letter sent by N.P.Raghavan (one of the Dandi Yatra satyagrahis) from Payannur in Kerala, dated 7 June 1931. Gandhi enquires about Titus, adding that he had been informed that they all felt unwanted and weary there, and if that was the case they could return to the Ashram.[28]

Titus thus returned to Sabarmati Ashram and continued to manage the goshala there for the next four years. He met Gandhi regularly to obtain advice on the activities of the dairy farm. Gandhi in the meantime had continued to write on dairying. In his *Ashram Observances in Action*, which he wrote in 1932 while he was in Yervada jail, an entire chapter is devoted to dairying. He stated that the Ashram believed that the cow would pay for its keep if she was treated well and her products fully utilised. He felt that all goshalas should be organised scientifically and religiously, and that if cows were well kept, they would be capable of greater production. Even dead cattle needed to be fully utilised and consequently tanning was introduced in the Ashram.[29]

Most of Gandhi's subsequent references to Titus can be found in Gandhi's correspondence with Narandas Gandhi, a nephew of his who lived in Sabarmati Ashram since 1919 and became its manager in 1928. In July 1932 in response to a letter from Narandas, Gandhi directs him to do whatever he thought proper regarding Titus, and to pay him if he was fully satisfied with his work. However, a few months later, he tells Narandas that it was improper for Titus to overstay his leave, as the Ashram rules were applicable to all inmates.[30] At the same time, reflective of his sense of justice, he points out that if the reasons for such behaviour were known, the inmates could be judged better. He therefore proceeds with the instruction not to enforce the rules immediately with Titus, but from henceforth.

Thomas Titus narrates that on one of his father's visits to Kerala to meet his grandfather, Titus burnt British made clothing and gave a

fiery speech in Kottayam calling on the people to rise against the colonial rule.[31]

On 25 March 1933, in his first of several letters to Titus, Gandhi lists out 15 questions regarding the cleanliness of the cows, cowsheds and the process of milking, as well as the cleanliness of the milkmen, utensils, trainers, place of milking, and so on. He also enquires about the timings of milking, the use of dung and urine for manure, the average quantity of milk obtained per day, the highest and lowest yield of a single cow, and the quantity of milk being sold.[32] His concern about the calves was evident in the query whether they were being given their share of milk. Gandhi's eye for detail and complete immersion in his causes can be seen.

A few weeks later, on receiving Titus' reply, Gandhi again writes to him, applauding him for his letter and giving several suggestions in response to Titus' answers to his questions. He further adds that he does not want to give Titus more work than necessary, but that the dairy should be a first class model dairy of its kind. The letter goes on to address Titus' request to introduce homeopathy in the Ashram. He points out that he had never been able to take kindly to it, but his ideal was to be independent of outside medical assistance. Hence, he states that if Titus had accurate knowledge and the time to spare, he did not mind homeopathy being introduced. But it should be done in consultation with Narandas and others responsible. Two weeks later, Gandhi again writes to Titus clarifying his stance on homeopathy. While he preferred it to allopathy; he had no personal experience of its efficacy. He reiterates that if Titus had the confidence in himself and the time to spare, he had no objection to him trying it.[33] Here again one can see Gandhi's openness to dialogue and suggestions and his willingness to engage with new ideas. As he stated: "I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my pursuit after Truth, I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things."[34]

Gandhi subsequently wrote to Narandas that he liked the suggestions given in Titus' report, and that all that appeared to be good should be implemented. He also stated that Titus should be given an assistant. He further pointed out that accounts relating to Titus' work should be kept separately under Narandas' supervision.[35] Gandhi had always insisted on transparent handling of public funds, whether it was in the context of the Natal Indian Congress or Phoenix Settlement or Tolstoy Farm. Even in his personal life, his autobiography reveals his meticulous keeping of accounts right from his student days. Details of finances and accounts of the various institutions and causes that he was associated with can be seen scattered throughout the *Collected Works.*

On 26 July 1933, soon after his release from prison, Gandhi announced his intention to disband Sabarmati Ashram. He wrote to the Home Secretary of the Government of Bombay that since the government clearly did not seek or desire peace, the struggle would become more prolonged and required more sacrifice from the people. As the author of the movement, the greatest sacrifice was required from him. He therefore offered what was "nearest and dearest" to him – the land and buildings of Sabarmati Ashram in which he had worked for the last eighteen years. He added that every head of cattle and every tree had its history and sacred association. They were all members of one big family. He thus announced that he was disbanding Sabarmati Ashram and wished to give it to the government, on the condition that everything was to be used for public purposes. If the government did not wish to take over all the movables, these would be distributed to various organisations. Gandhi did not receive any response from the government and the Ashram was finally handed over to the Harijan Sevak Sangh on 30 September 1933. On behalf of the Ashram and the Goseva Sangh of which he was the President, Gandhi entrusted the dairy and cattle to Shankerlal Banker, telling him to manage it as a public undertaking. He further added that Titus would be working as manager of the dairy and as secretary and would be paid a monthly allowance of Rs. 75/-.[36]

Gandhi informed Sardar Vallabhai Patel that the Ashram dairy was being run near Kankaria, with Titus in charge of it, and Banker exercising general supervision, and that it was running fairly well. A few months later, Gandhi instructs Narandas that no one should interfere with Titus' work. "When we have handed over a thing for somebody to manage, we may give only as much help as he may ask for. To take interest in what we have given away is like sacrificing oneself for the sake of the dead."[37]

A few months later, Titus married Annamma, a school student at the time, who was twelve years younger than him. Although she expressed her desire to continue her studies, Titus disagreed. On reaching Ahmedabad, a few days later, they were permitted to stay in Gandhi's house for a few days as he was away from the Ashram at the time. But this arrangement was subject to the condition that they would not sleep together. Thomas Titus narrates that at the Ashram, Gandhi demanded that she give him her ornaments consisting of four gold bangles and a gold necklace. Annamma initially refused, but relented on Titus' persuasion. A similar situation took place about cleaning the toilets,[38] an experience that is reminiscent of his own insistence on Kasturba cleaning the chamber pot of a guest in their home in South Africa.

Thomas Titus writes that with his mother with him, his father began to neglect his duties, leaving more to his assistants. Although he later sent her home to Kerala with a friend, he was heartbroken and could not sleep for days.[39]

A reading of the *Collected Works* reveals that matters relating to the dairy had begun to take a turn by June 1934. Gandhi wrote to Narandas asking him to think over the problems of the dairy and to ensure that the work there was not neglected. He instructs him to write to Titus and tell him that he should attend to things at the right time, without spending time away from the dairy as he wished. Yet it is interesting that a few weeks later, Gandhi in a letter to Narandas suggests the names of Shankerlal, Ambalbhai, Ranchhodbhai and Titus to be trustees of the dairy if it was to be run independently. He explained that he had omitted the names of those who were likely to be imprisoned.[40]

Reporting on Gandhi's visit to Kerala in 1934, the Malayalam newsweekly *Nasrani Deepika* states that when he was in Kottayam on 18 January Gandhi enquired about Titus' father and told his brother that it would be possible to meet his father in Changanacherry. On 21 January Titus' father met Gandhi in Thiruvananthapuram.[41] The present authors have not been able to trace any other historical documents referring to their meeting. However, Thomas Titus writes that Gandhi called upon his grandfather at his home and assured him that his son was doing well at Sabarmati.[42]

In October 1934 Gandhi wrote to Parikh enquiring into reports that the working of the dairy was steadily deteriorating, and to examine its working. He also wrote to Narandas enquiring about the cause of "so much loss" in the dairy, calling for suggestions on the future course of action.[43] In a subsequent letter to Ambalal Sarabhai, Gandhi accedes that the loss to the dairy over the last year had indeed been very heavy and that he was looking into the matter. He requests Ambalal to meet the loss up to December, clarifying that he did not intend to run the dairy at a loss for over a year. He made it clear that in "all public activities under my charge throughout my life, I have always tried to balance the two sides. I do not hesitate to incur a loss when I think it necessary to do so, but then I do it knowingly."[44] He also made it clear to G.V.Mavalankar that if the dairy did not succeed even after so much loss had been borne for five years, it would be wound up. It is evident from his subsequent letter to Parikh that Mavalankar and Ranchodbhai gave him money for the dairy and that Ambalbhai intended to pay for the losses till 31 December.[45]

This period also saw a visible change in the tone of Gandhi's letters to Titus. He asks for the accounts, to explain how losses had been

incurred and reprimands Titus for his request for arrangements being made while he was away from the dairy. He also refers to reports that the cattle were looking miserable. At the same time, he commends Titus' suggestions for rearrangements in the dairy pointing out that they were worthy of consideration. However, he cautions that these suggestions needed to be discussed with Narandas, Shankerlal and Parikh and an informed decision taken. A few weeks later, he responds to Titus' letter, accepting his explanation on the status of the cows. He also reveals that he was attracted to the suggestion to move the dairy to Biraj, but queries whether the matter had not been discussed with Narandas. He further revealed that he was making arrangements for the prompt payment for the money that was lost.[46] Gandhi's confusion regarding Titus again emerges in his subsequent letter to Narandas in April 1935 to which is attached a report from Ramanlal. He asks Narandas to go to Sabarmati Ashram for a few days, immediately, if possible, to inspect the accounts to help him decide on the future course of action. He asks: "Is Titus inefficient or dishonest, or is Ramanlal's letter without basis."[47] A few days later he again writes to Narandas to "do something about the inspection of Titus' work and finish with it."[48]

Gandhi's approach to Titus is further revealed in his subsequent letter to Parikh two weeks later. Gandhi informs him that he had written to Titus asking him to hand over charge immediately. Following this, he was to wait there until the arrival of Narandas, and then proceed to join Gandhi. He further queries: "Do you have any suspicion regarding his integrity? If possible, I wish to keep him with us. Please therefore guide me."[49]

Gandhi also wrote to Narandas, informing him that Titus had been relieved from Sabarmati Ashram, adding that "Narahari has no trust at all in his ability. I have called him here. If he comes, I will keep him and watch him. In any case you should go and look into his accounts."[50] He later makes it clear to Narandas that if the dairy at the ashram cannot be retained, Titus could go. He again asks Parikh to inform him as to whether Titus had handed over charge and assures him that he would write to Titus again if he had not done so. Two weeks later, Gandhi again wrote to Narandas clarifying that Titus had not gone on leave, but had left the Ashram, elaborating that he had been paid rail fare for the journey. Although he had agreed to keep Titus at Wardha, the latter did not seem to be very eager, responding that he would reply from Travancore. Gandhi further reveals that he had refused to give Titus a note of recommendation.[51]

Referring to this later part of his father's life in the ashram, Thomas Titus writes that Titus visited Gandhi in Wardha and requested for a

few days leave to visit his family in Kerala. Gandhi agreed, going on to tell him that he wanted to start a dairy farm in Wardha and asked him to select a place for it. Titus informed Gandhi the next day that as Wardha was a very barren place, it was not appropriate to start a cattle farm there. However, in the presence of Mirabehn (formerly Madeline Slade), Gandhi reportedly responded: "We have already decided. We have to start the farm here. If you decide to join you have to serve under Mirabehn." Titus' son elaborates that his father was astonished that after all his experiences of racial discrimination in South Africa and his struggle against British domination, Gandhi was asking his disciple, a dairy expert to work under a novice, who was ironically British. Titus responded that he did not think he could work under her. To Gandhi's question as to whether he did not trust him, Titus responded that it was the other way round. Gandhi did not reply and Titus left the Ashram to return to Kerala by January 1935.[52] The present authors have not been able to validate this interaction in any of the historical documents and writings on Gandhi during this period. Gandhi's letters to Narandas and Narahari D. Parikh, as found in the *Collected Works* refer to Titus as still being with the dairy until April 1935.[53]

In any case, an important point missed in the whole episode as narrated above by Thomas Titus was that for Gandhi it was never about people but about principles. Gandhi had no enemies, only adversaries. He fought against the British Empire but not the British people and valued his close relations with them. Furthermore, a larger understanding of the issues involved here requires mention.

After the Dandi Yatra, Gandhi was left without a home and on the invitation of Jamnalal Bajaj had extended stays in Wardha in an ashram founded and funded by Bajaj. When Gandhi finally moved to Wardha, Bajaj gave him a house and an orange orchard that was situated on the outskirts of the village. It was around this time that Mirabehn expressed her desire to Gandhi to relocate to a village further from Wardha.[54]

The daughter of an admiral of the British Navy, Mirabehn had decided to visit Gandhi in India after reading Romain Rolland's book on him. She trained herself for a year – becoming a vegetarian, teetotaller, learning Urdu, subscribing to *Young India*, reading the Hindu epics, using khadi, learning to spin etc, in order to be able to fit into Gandhi's Ashram. She came to India in 1925 and continued to live in the country for the next 31 years. At their first meeting, Gandhi gave her the name Mirabehn and later told her that he would be her father and mother. She became an integral part of Sabarmati Ashram and Gandhi's life as well as his political interventions – participating

in the Civil Disobedience Movement, being arrested and imprisoned on several occasions, accompanying Gandhi to the Round Table Conference in London in 1931, and serving as his emissary to the Viceroy. However, her real interest since childhood had been the world of nature.[55]

Gandhi agreed to her request to relocate. After surveying the surrounding villages, Mirabehn selected Segaon, where a large portion of the land was owned by Bajaj and more than half the population consisted of "harijans"[56] It was situated approximately eight kilometres from Wardha and was later renamed Sevagram.

According to Thomas Titus' narrative, read in conjunction with the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, it could have been at this juncture that Gandhi's discussion with Titus in the presence of Mirabehn took place. Mirabehn was soon joined by other followers of Gandhi in Sevagram and later by Gandhi himself in 1936. However, for reasons of health, she subsequently moved to live in a hut in Veroda village on a hillside. Gandhi's description of her living abode is itself very revealing of the kind of values that they shared. He referred to it as being: "not merely a hut. It is a poem. I saw the villager's mentality about everything in it."[57]

The last reference to Titus in the *Collected Works* is in Gandhi's letter to Parikh in February 1937 stating that Titus had requested for a certificate from him to help him secure a job, but that he had responded with the query as to what use a certificate from him would be in a technical matter.[58]

From 1937 to 1943 Titus reportedly worked as Manager of the Municipal Dairy in Ooty and later moved on to manage dairies in Pune, New Delhi, Bhopal and Bhilai. His last project was the setting up of a dairy in the Hindustan Motors township in West Bengal. He had settled in Bhopal in 1948 and was a strong advocate of khadi which he wore till his last days in 1980. He was a deeply religious person and donated 29 acres of land to the Mar Thoma church there. At the same time, he had no qualms in telling the Bishop of his community that he did not want to go "to a Christian heaven which has no place for Gandhiji."[59]

The Bharat of My Dreams

Gandhi's influence on Titus is most evident from the book that the latter wrote in 1968: *The Bharat of My Dreams: A Prediction of the Shape of Things to Come, as Visualised as a Dream of the Common Man*.[60] In fact, he writes in the Preface that the work was a humble attempt to take up the thread where it was left on 30 January 1948, the date of Gandhi's martyrdom. The title of the book as well as the thoughts on which it

is based are themselves reminiscent of Gandhi's oft quoted statement: "I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony.... This is *the India of my dreams.*"[61]

The book opens with a dedication written on 2 October 1968, which is self explanatory of the perspective behind the publication:

> This little book is humbly dedicated to,
> Him who is downtrodden and exploited,
> Who does not live, but eke out a mere existence,
> Who makes a daily struggle to live...[62]

The book is interspersed with quotations of Gandhi with the title page quoting him that "if everyone lived by the sweat of his brow, the earth would be a paradise." So also, the preface opens with Gandhi's words: "If we could see our dream of true democracy being realised we would regard the humblest and the lowest Indian, as being equal to the tallest in the land."[63]

Titus reveals that his few years of association with Gandhi had taught him the "great ideal of equality and life of what is called, 'labour sustenance.'"[64] The Preface concludes by quoting Gandhi: that "God created man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves."[65] Titus argues that the common man dreams of liberation from the yoke of capitalists, the tyranny of officials, the weight of soaring prices and economic depredation. He points out that the aim of the book was to show how the dream of the common man could be realised in a peaceful manner. He gives a clarion call to rise and shake off their shackles, to find a way to move out of the existing impasse.

The style of the book again brings to mind Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*.[66] While the latter is in the form of a dialogue between the reader and the editor, Titus' book is an imaginary travelogue and conversation between the author and a guide. Travelling in his dreams through a city and a village, Titus visualises what Gandhi theorised. The book discusses the sights that he sees on this imaginary journey. One gets the impression that these are a revelation of Gandhi's ideas when put into actual practice.

Titus' dreams lead him to a village. During a walk through the cornfields, he finds all classes of people, not just village peasants, but even the wife of the District Commissioner working in the fields. The guide explains that the state system of compulsory labour resulted in

a happy union of intellectuals and workers. The latter felt more dignified in their labour, while the former introduced improved methods whereby production increased and there was no scarcity, malnutrition or starvation. Children were looked after free of charge by state run nurseries. Eateries were owned and managed by the state for the workers, who could eat there free of charge or alternatively get free ration. The principle was that those who work have the right to eat and lead a comfortable life.

Villages were remodelled with small well built homes. Almost every third village had a school, a hospital, a home for the aged and the disabled, and a dairy farm. There were no privately owned transportation systems. Conservation of organic manure, open tube wells, small scale cottage industries, barter system and land given to the tiller were other highlights. Titus concludes this section on the revolutionization of villages with Gandhi's statement: "If you really want to see India at its best, you have to find it in the humble village homes."[67]

The guide further elaborates about the collective farming system where excess fruits, dairy, poultry, and so on were given after barter to the Cooperative Barter Bank to be exchanged for credit notes to buy requirements. All transactions were through the exchange of commodities rather than money.

Education followed a 'teaching as they do' system, and was such that children were taught to be self-sufficient while working in the fields, garden and kitchen. An eight-year-old would know cooking and washing. No particular religious teaching was adopted, except that there is only one God whom all should love and worship. All were sent to the world to lead lives of truth, love and simplicity. Importance was given to character building.

Titus' travels lead him to the jail or 'District Reformatory' as it was called. Prisoners led a normal life and were given all comforts as ordinary citizens, with only their freedom being restricted. The idea behind imprisonment was not to torment but reform. Capital punishment did not exist. Since trials were self-conducted, there were no delays. The state had legal consultants whom the judge could consult, but there were no lawyers or formal courts of law. All cases were settled through arbitration or the people's court, with a right to appeal.

Moving on to visit a city, Titus finds that they had become ghost cities. The drain of wealth and resources to cities had ended, thereby discouraging the influx of population to them. Those who remained in the cities had to take care of their own affairs.

The book concludes with Titus categorically stating that there will

not be peace and contentment in the world unless there is equality and fairness for all. He also adds that books should not be made for profit, and hence the cost of his book would be the cost of production. It is interesting to note that the manuscript of the book was corrected by the eminent writer Ruskin Bond, whom Titus duly acknowledges.

Conclusion

Titus' personal association with Gandhi during his stay in Sabarmati Ashram had a deep impact on his life, especially in his later years, as evident from the book that he wrote in 1968, thirty three years after he had left the ashram. Gandhi's ideals of equality and labour sustenance particularly appealed to him. Notwithstanding certain discrepancies in the narratives surrounding Titus, his role in the Dandi Yatra, as well as the Sabarmati Ashram dairy farm and his engagement with Gandhi are indisputable. Their interactions, as viewed from a larger perspective, and as revealed through the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* as well as the narratives of Titus, reflect on various aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy. These range from questions of ahimsa to brahmacharya, the search for truth, vegetarianism, bread labour, simple living, goseva and so on. It also reflected on his life and the nature of his interaction with others, including elements of what Madhu Kishwar refers to as the bias of a 'benevolent patriarch,'[68] his stricture for financial accountability, his style of leadership and sense of discipline, his openness to new ideas and his struggles being against policies and principles rather than against people per se.

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Gandhian Sarvodaya, Dairy Cooperative Society and Rural Development: A Case Study of SJDUSS in Assam

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ABSTRACT

Gandhian notion of Sarvodaya was introduced to establish 'village swaraj' to reconstruct rural India. The principles of Sarvodaya are pointed towards the upliftment and development of all aspects of an individual and help towards rural development. This paper attempts to study how village swaraj and the principles of Sarvodaya are reflected in the values that a dairy cooperative society, the Sitajakhala Dugdha Utpadak Samabai Samiti Limited (SJDUSS), has been generating in Assam. The paper also explores the relevance of Gandhian Sarvodaya in the cooperative society in contemporary times, which is conserved as a means by which peasant cultivators can help each other improve their position. It also enquires whether this could be an alternative way to nurture a nation at the grassroots level.

Key words: *Sarvodaya, Gandhi, village swaraj, dairy cooperatives, rural development.*

Introduction

A NATION THRIVES ONLY when the rural society develops along with it, which is the distinctive part of the Indian nation. Real India resides in the village, and for that purpose, people have been thinking and trying to develop the 'rural nation' in the form of collective enterprises. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the pioneers in this regard in

modern India. In most of his writings, Gandhi emphasized the different aspects of rural life, such as agriculture, education, village industry, animal husbandry, etc. Gandhi spoke about his ideals in *'Rama Rajya'* and village *'swaraj.'* Gandhiji's vision of 'village swaraj' is not the revival of the old village panchayats but the development of new independent swaraj village units in the modern world. Gandhiji's ideal society is a 'stateless democracy' in which the state of enlightened anarchy is self-regulated.[1] Gandhiji's 'village swaraj' is not the "withering of the state" but the "scattering of the state". Village Swaraj is a man-centred, non-exploiting, decentralized, simple village economy that provides full employment to all of its citizens by voluntary cooperation and striving towards self-sufficiency in food, clothes, and other basics of life.[2]

Gandhiji's notion of village swaraj has certain basic principles that are well reflected in the fundamentals of a cooperative society, such as *The supremacy of full employment*, where everyone obtains suitable employment to generate sufficient income to meet their living needs with the right to life. *Body-labour* is the principle that everyone should put in the effort to earn a living rather than relying on others for assistance. Gandhiji also emphasised Equity which represents the equalization of status attained through equitable distribution and economic equality. *Decentralization* is another principle that Gandhi emphasised in rural industrialisation structured India with independent villages. Along with the component of *Swadeshi* where, every Indian hamlet is expected to be nearly self-sufficient and self-contained. *Self-sufficiency*: The village should be a social unit where people are self-sufficient and can make their own food and clothing. *Cooperation*: Gandhiji talked about the cooperation of the people in doing their work. *Satyagraha*: The village community would approve non-violence and non-cooperation through the Satyagraha technique. *Equality of religion*: Every religion has an equal role in society. Gandhiji gave equal importance to all religions. *Panchayati Raj*: A Panchayat of five individuals, consisting of both men and women who meet the basic requirements, would administer the village. They would be chosen yearly by the community's adult residents. *Nai-Talim*: It means 'basic education for all'. Gandhiji states that knowledge and works are interrelated; thus, he focused on vocational education to make individuals self-sufficient.[3]

The secret of a successful cooperative effort is that the members must believe in cooperation, which should have a definite progressive goal. According to Gandhiji, cooperation is necessary for creating a socialistic society and complete decentralization of power. He believed that cooperation is one of the important means to empower people.[4]

He always focused on the 'cooperation system', particularly in the agricultural sector. For that purpose, he encouraged the village youth to take up cooperative farming and, at the same time, urged them to form 'dairy cooperatives'.[5] He is of the view that, for promoting our national interests, cooperative farming or dairying is unquestionably a worthwhile goal. And there should be more and more such establishments.[6] In *Ramarajya,* he firmly opines that only through cooperative farming one can fully gain the benefits of agriculture.[7] In addition, Acharya Vinoba Bhave also emphasized the urgent demand for *Gramadana* to organize the Indian villages on a cooperative community basis.[8]

Scholars like Ostergaard and Kumarappa have found an affinity for Sarvodaya to Communism and Anarchism. There is fundamental dissimilarity between them. According to *Bharatan Kumarappa,* although its goal is similar to Communism, *Sarvodaya*'s essentially spiritual foundation is the antithesis of Communism, which is openly materialistic.[9] The ideals of *Sarvodaya* hold to pursue its goal with non-violence, whereas both Communism and Anarchism believe in violence in justifying its 'means' to attain its 'ends'. However, neither Anarchism nor Sarvodaya envisions a world where individuals are free from social constraints. Both highlight the importance of moral authority in sustaining social control and cohesion and claim that it might replace the existing political and legal authorities with the appropriate social institutions. Both hold that, just as in the family, even in society, the property is to be shared in common with everyone contributing according to their abilities and getting as per their needs. They stressed decentralization to disperse social power widely to avoid tyranny and exploitation.[10] Ostergaard (1971) has referred to *lok-Niti*[11] replacing *raj-Niti*[12], which involves making people aware of their inner strengths and solving their issues.[13] The Communists and the Gandhians advocating *Sarvodaya* believed that people would become more self-reliant and create new self-governing institutions when the stateless society developed. However, in the contemporary world, the concept of a stateless society is hardly applicable; therefore, instead of creating new self-governing institutions, people should try to create institutions that would help them empower themselves and be self-reliant, along with aid from the state.

Considering the Gandhian Village Swaraj as the yardstick, the present study aims to illustrate the linkage between *Sarvodaya* and village swaraj with particular reference to the Sitajakhala Dugdha Utpadak Samabai Samiti Limited (SJDUSS) in Assam. Taking examples from the empirical data collected, the authors will deal with the relevance of village Swaraj and Sarvodaya in the present context of

Assam.

Methodology

Sitajakhala, located in Amlighat, is a small locality in Jagiroad in the Morigaon district of Assam, which covers an area of 10, 83,165Bighas and 13 Lessas (1450.02 Sq. Kms). The river Brahmaputra, Karbi Anglong District, Nagaon District, and Kamrup District surround the district on its North, South, East, and West, respectively. This qualitative research was conducted in a phenomenological manner to deconstruct the participants' experiences in a dairy cooperative and to understand how a cooperative society pushes rural development. The study utilized the survey method to access the assets required for a dairy cooperative society and its way to rural development.

A paper-based survey based on previous research on similar topics was carried out to obtain data on SDUSS. The questionnaire has been tested in the Sitajakhala village of the Morigaon District in Assam to ensure questions have been worded, potential responses could cover common themes, and the topics could be relevant to the proper audience. The questionnaire was also fine-tuned further in the study region. Free responses were solicited for open-ended questions and later categorized using a comprehensive and predefined list unknown to respondents to avoid possible bias. The questionnaire is composed of a total of 11 questions, including open-ended, Likert scale, check-all, and close-ended questions, and it is focused on the socio-demographic profile of households, questions on how cooperative societies change their community lifestyles and household decision-making and, finally, the information people need to make decisions. Therefore, respondents were asked questions on a variety of subjects, such as the types of benefits from the government initiatives they have already experienced, how they have managed their daily lifestyle in a dairy-based livelihood, what types of techniques they currently use, and what barriers exist to dairy planning and rural development. This section highlighted methods adopted for the study, which was discussed under the nature of data, data source, sampling procedure, and analysis of the data.

Gandhian *Sarvodaya* and Global Experiences

For his ideal 'village swaraj' or *'gram swaraj'*, Gandhiji wanted to establish *'Sarvodaya Samaj'* by transferring power to the people at the grassroots level. 'Sarvodaya' is a Sanskrit term comprising two words: *'Sarva'* meaning 'all' and *'Udaya'* meaning 'uplift'. Its philosophical beliefs are solely focused on uplifting and developing all aspects of a person's life.[14,15] Gandhiji coined the term *'Sarvodaya'* as the title of his

1908 translation of John Ruskin's book on political economy, "Unto the Last". Gandhiji coined the term, and the idea of '*Sarvodaya*' is innovatively Gandhian. Later, Gandhiji embraced it to describe his own political philosophy.[16] The Gandhian followers also adopted the term for the post-independence social movements in India that aimed at ensuring self-determination and equality for all.[17,18] Gandhiji wanted to uplift the downtrodden through his ideal of *Sarvodaya*. *Sarvodaya* advocates for a simple decentralized economy and for the village communities to be self-sufficient.[19] *Sarvodaya* provides opportunities for the holistic development of both individuals and society. The welfare of all the marginalized sections of society was naturally included in Gandhi's vision of *Sarvodaya*, which included cooperation and trusteeship in the economic sphere, equal political participation, and mutual aid in the social sphere without regard to caste, class, or gender.[20,21] According to *Geoffrey Ostergaard*, India's *Sarvodaya* Movement is an initiative to adapt Mahatma Gandhi's original philosophy to social reconstruction.[22]

Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne adopted Gandhiji's concept of '*Sarvodaya*' and added a Buddhist twist to its meaning, connoting it as 'awakening of all' and, thus, in 1958, founded the '*Sarvodaya Shramadana* Movement' in Sri Lanka. '*Shramadana*' is a Sanskrit word, which means 'to donate one's labour without expecting anything in return'; compensation is peace of mind and good karma for the future. This philosophy has two sources of inspiration. Firstly, this philosophy was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave's work in India to bring about social and spiritual transformation. Secondly, Sri Lanka's 2,500 years of Buddhist culture have aided the rural community in forming a strong cooperative unit that is self-sufficient and creative.[23] The *Sarvodaya* Movement proposes a new paradigm of development that is both sustainable and inclusive, as well as morally appealing to all. This philosophy emphasizes full self-realization through devoted service to the community, particularly to its weaker members, and thus serves as a social ethic for the common good. They become conscious of their actual needs, capacity to work together, and potential to change.[24,25] According to A. Ratna (1990), *Sarvodaya* thinkers oppose not the welfare of the people, but the welfare state that deprives individuals of their initiative; as a result, they envision a society in which people plan and carry out their welfare work, with state authority's role limited to inspiring and encouraging them in this responsibility, as well as assisting when they need it.[26] The movement is centred on village needs and how decentralised coordination and training services are provided. *Sarvodaya*'s involvement in a village indicates a form of technical help provided to the community projects

in which the village itself provides the management, majority of the labour force, and material resources, and it also contributes financially.[27] The *Sarvodaya Shramadana* Movement seeks to bring natural and human resources together to bridge the functional gaps within and across villages. The *Sarvodaya Shramadana* Movement of Sri-Lanka is a model of a labour-sharing and self-help rural development movement. In Sri Lanka, the movement has attempted to alleviate rural poverty while also promoting environmentally sustainable agriculture and integrating the rural communities through self-help.[28]

Both Gandhi's ideal of *Sarvodaya* and Ariyaratne's *Sarvodaya Shramadana* Movement focus on the upliftment of the rural society and have certain levels of similarities between them. But Gandhi's *Sarvodaya* is a concept that has certain philosophical beliefs that need to be followed for the upliftment of each one and all in the rural society. Whereas, the *Sarvodaya Shramadana* Movement in Sri Lanka is focused on the disadvantaged section of the people in the village. This movement is an approach which urges people to work towards twofold liberation in the Buddhist sense: breaking one's mind from its limitations and liberating the community from unfair socio-economic situations in a non-violent way via communal labour, sharing, and participation in the community's holistic development.[29]

Sarvodaya, SJDUSS and Rural Development: An Analysis

The first half of the 20th century saw the migration of the *Gorkha* community's cattle graziers from the various districts of Assam to Amlighat, and before Independence, the culture of rearing cattle for milk became prevalent in the region. Cattle farming was carried out during that period based on the custom of traditional free grazing in the nearby meadows as a means of subsistence, and the milk industry operated in an unorganized manner. The people were engaged in cattle rearing on a private basis as it was in their tradition and legacy. Since the British Colonial Period era, the *khutiwallas* (dairymen) have resided and raised cattle in the Professional Grazing Reserve (PGR). They used to rear *bathaan* cattle, which required huge spaces for their grazing. However, the land encroachments made it difficult for them to operate their business smoothly. Thus, to address the issue of grazing land, people began to implement stall-feeding and adopted the modern methods of artificial insemination for cross-breed cattle.[30]

In the years leading up to and immediately after independence, a group of individuals known as *Paikari* (wholesale milk traders), would procure milk products at a low cost from local *khutiwallas* and then sell them in the adjacent cities of Guwahati and Nagaon for a considerably higher price. Thus, when the demand for milk increased

after the Independence, a group of middlemen (the *paikaris*) began to pave their path to maximize profits at the expense of the hardships faced by farmers. Consequently, a group of individuals decided to take organized action against the middlemen in the milk industry, leading to the establishment of Sitajakhala Dugdha Utpadak Samabai Samiti Limited.

Towards the end of the 1970s, the SJDUSS managed over 1,000 litres of milk per day and successfully added over 200 dairy farmers to its membership.[31] The Key Villages Scheme (KVS), which was implemented during the first three Five-Year Plans, initially aimed to establish bull breeding farms in the nation's major cattle tracts with the primary goal of expanding the supply of breeding bulls.[32] Thus, in 1974, farmers in Sitajakhala, led by Nandalal Upadhyaya, attempted to introduce superior breeds of high-yielding cattle by obtaining agricultural loans from the Sonapur branch of UCO Bank, which was then refinanced by the Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC). The introduction of farmer-friendly policies by the Indian government during Operation Flood II led to a notable increase in the number of cattle farmers and milk production at the grassroots level. Along the way, the farmers attempted to adopt a new artificial insemination program offered by the Department of Animal Husbandry, eventually transitioning from indigenous cows to cross-breed jersey cows.[33]

SJDUSS is one of those institutions that has played an important role in the milk revolution in Assam. Since its inception in 1958, SJDUSS has contributed to the development of the people of the concerned area. Initially, the primary goal of establishing this dairy cooperative society was to create a challenge for the dairying sector's middlemen, abolish them, and develop themselves through this dairy cooperative society.[34] Most dairy farmers did not get remunerative returns in the pre-establishment period due to the extensive web of middlemen and the lack of access to organized markets. However, after adopting the cooperative model and implementing the Operation Flood programme, the scenario changed, and the dairy farmers gradually became aware and self-reliant. With time, SJDUSS has become the epitome of a self-sustaining institution. The young generation is encouraged to gain knowledge and skills that would assure self-employment through agriculture and its allied practices. Dairy farmers eagerly engage themselves in cooperative societal works to ensure their development as well as that of society.[35]

This Cooperative Society provides an ecosystem in which farmers flourish. The area of operation in the society covers 10 Panchayats in the Morigaon district from Khetri to Nelie. This milk cooperative

society contributes to the development of Amlighat. The milk marketing system of SJDUSS is still going through changes and development. There was no other product-making unit except cream separation till 2015, but slowly various other dairy products such as *paneer, curd, rasgulla,* and other kinds of sweets were made available at its Amlighat centre, which has a high demand due to their quality.[36]The society began supplying processed milk on November 14, 2018. They started to provide pasteurised and homogenized cow milk, curd, cream, *paneer*, sweets like *rasgulla*, *lalmohan* , and other milk products to the market. The SJDUSS have tried to move towards a unique path with their 'Zero Water' concept. Starting in September 2015, they successfully provided consumers with milk free from adulteration by bringing a few milk scanner equipment and began to procure milk with zero added water. Due to this, most of the dairy farmers are happy and enthusiastic to work with the society but at the same time few others are not at all happy with their 'zero water' concept and have opted to move out from the cooperative society showing their dissatisfaction with the SJDUSS.

The cooperative society (SJDUSS) wants to see Assam be self-reliant on milk production and has been trying to transform society with modern technologies for better performance. With its cooling plants and pasteurizing and packaging units, the society has made them self-dependent. The expansion of the society's processing facilities also encouraged certain dairy farmers, possibly the larger ones, to invest in additional dairy cows to expand their milk production capacity, as it is already their expectation that the SJDUSS will buy all their additional milk. Due to this, though SJDUSS was able to reap the economic benefits of the downstream markets with added value, yet, there were constraints on the amount of pasteurised and homogenised milk that could be sold directly to consumers, because bulk purchases in the wholesale market were not particularly profitable.[37] The Sitajakhala community aspires to empower rural communities by providing opportunities for productive self-employment and improving social justice, peace, progress, and a sense of unity.[38] For that, they have also set certain goals to channel and assist in the implementation of the programs of rural development under the supervision of the district administration.

Presently, it encompasses about 1000 producing farmers and around 4000 farmers who are earning their livelihoods by providing their agro-allied services to the farm.[39] The cooperative society has contributed a lot to the development of the region and its people. They helped the surrounding villagers in terms of education by assisting in establishing educational institutions (started the SitaJakhala

High School and even contributed to the Jagiroad College) and providing financial aid to the poor and needy meritorious students. The cooperative society also provides training courses for cattle rearing and hygienic dairy farming. Dairy farmers also receive low-cost vaccinations, veterinarian services, and fodder from the cooperative society from time to time. They encourage the women's equal participation in the dairy industry. Thus, SJDUSS has been actively trying to contribute to the development of society, and it can be said that it has been an agency of rural development that is helping the rural people to uplift themselves through self-empowering and self-sustaining. With its 'Zero Water' concept, the SJDUSS attempted to take a novel approach. They brought a few milk scanner machines and began procuring milk with zero added water, thereby successfully supplying the consumers with non-adulterated milk. As a result, most farmers are pleased and enthusiastic about cooperating with the society.[40] The SJDUSS wants Assam to be self-sufficient in the arena of milk production, and, hence it has been attempting to reconstruct society through the use of modern technologies.

Even during the COVID-19 lockdown period, the cooperative has proved to be able to look after themselves much better than the other dairy cooperatives. When other small cooperative societies were struggling during the lockdown period, the SJDUSS was able to run more smoothly as they had their own cooling and packaging plant and thus overcame the obstacles easily. Since the new processing plants launched in November 2018, raw milk collection, production, and marketing of processed milk (pasteurized and homogenized) and milk products have increased (Table 1). This has achieved significant price increases for both fluid milk and value-added milk products, thus essentially benefiting its members directly and indirectly.[41]

Table 1
Processed Milk and Milk Products Produced by SJDUSS

YEAR	Average Milk produced per day (liters)	Milk used for processing per day (liters)	Growth Percentage
2016-2017 (Before the establishment of the processing plant	10,340	480	22

YEAR	Average Milk produced per day (liters)	Milk used for processing per day (liters)	Growth Percentage
2018-2019 (during the establishment of the processing plant	16,000	2,500	6
2019-2020 (AFTER the establishment of the processing plant	17,000	8,000	2,125
2021-2022 (After the establishment of the processing plant	3627721	9938	365.035319
2022-2023 (After the establishment of the processing plant	3122808	8555	365.0272355
Grand Total	6,793,869	29473	230.5116208

Source: SJDUSS accounts and Kashyap and Bhuyan, 2021

The Principal Investigator (PI) studied and analysed the attitude of the dairy farmers of SJDUSS regarding the satisfaction level and changes in their socio-economic status, educational opportunities for their children, and access to better health facilities after joining SJDUSS (Table 2). The researcher found that out of the total respondents, 36 percent of them strongly agree that their financial status has increased after joining the cooperative society, while the remaining 64 percent moderately agree on it, as they found joining the cooperative didn't bring much change in their financial status. 70 percent respondents strongly agree that their social status has also increased after their association with the cooperative society, and the remaining 30 percent respondents have a neutral response in this regard. Regarding having educational opportunities for the children of their family, 62 percent of respondents strongly agree that their children can now have access

to better educational opportunities. This is because SJDUSS has contributed to establishing and managing the local high school and college. Their children can now go to educational institutions and access better education facilities. The SJDUSS occasionally assists with local road construction, which also greatly helps the children from remote parts of the villages to have easy transportation facilities to access educational institutions. Meanwhile, the remaining 38 percent of respondents have a neutral response in this regard. The children of their household have had access to better educational opportunities even before joining the cooperative society. Regarding access to better health facilities, 38 percent strongly agree with it, while 62 percent have a neutral view of it. They opine that SJDUSS now has ambulance facilities, but they do not have enough. SJDUSS is a cooperative society that can only assist at a certain level but cannot provide or arrange for the health facilities of the farmers, as their primary aim is different. The Government authority should work enthusiastically and more intrinsically so that even remote areas of the villages can have access to better health facilities and opportunities.

Table 2
Changes found after joining the cooperative society

Status	Strongly agree (%)	Moderately agree (%)	Do not agree
Increase in Financial Status	64	36	0
Enhance in Social Status	70	30	0
Better Educational opportunities for children	62	38	0
Access to Better Health Facilities	38	42	0

Source: Field Study.

Unlike the other small dairy cooperatives that were struggling during the pandemic crisis, the SJDUSS was able to run smoothly owing to their own cooling and packaging plants.[42] The Sitajakhala

community strives to empower rural communities for sustainable self-employment by promoting social justice, peace, progress, and harmony.[43] When the SJDUSS is trying to provide help to the farmers regarding dairy development, they also try to provide their support to the farmers in financial matters. This Cooperative Society, at times, serves as an alternative to the national banks and the credit banks in the region. Most of the respondents received help and support from society while trying to get loans from banks for dairy farming. In 2016, an initiative was taken by the farmer members to transform the cooperative society through mechanization, and the cooperative society received a grant of 50 lakhs rupees from the government. The Society then set up a Milk Processing Plant on bank loans.[44] Some have even taken loans from the society, which they have paid back in instalments (Table 3). And they find this a better option since the cooperative doesn't charge interest on their loans. Though there is no special provision for the homeless, the handicapped, or migrant farm workers, the society has provided them with help through financial assistance on occasions. The Cooperative Society has also provided a platform for the local indigenous women to market their goods in front of their selling units.

Table 3
Programmes initiated by SJDUSS for the dairy farmers

Sl. No.	Policies/programmes initiated by SJDUSS	No. of Receivers	Total Respon-dents	Per-centage
1.	Specialized training for cattle rearing	51	100	51
2.	Vaccinations for cattle	82	100	82
3.	Financial aid/loans	79	100	79

Source: Field Study.

The newly joined dairy farmers lack certain skill development training programs or provisions. Therefore, SJDUSS occasionally organizes special training sessions for them. They try to provide dairy farmers with knowledge of the best management strategies for milk production, including knowledge of specific cattle breeds. However, in this case, the researcher found that only those farmers who had

recently joined the dairy farming industry generally participated in those cattle rearing training programs and received training certificates too (Table 3). Observation showed that second-generation or third-generation dairy farmers do not feel the need to attend those training programs as they have learned about cattle rearing and dairy farming since childhood. When asked about the provisions regarding receiving free vaccination facilities for cattle, the respondents spoke about getting the vaccines at a subsidised rate from the Cooperative Society. Since the government or the authorities hardly provide vaccination facilities, the SJDUSS tries to provide vaccines for the cattle at a subsidised rate to the needy. They also provide veterinary first-aid health services, fodder, and even artificial insemination services to dairy farmers. However, being a non-profit organization, the SJDUSS cannot afford to provide fully free fodder, so they try to provide the cattle fodder at a subsidised rate to the cooperative society members. The society here also plays an important role in the cattle-rearing process. They send people occasionally to check on the farmers' cows and check the shed's cleanliness.

Though farmers' cooperatives of different types play an important role in rural development, dairy cooperatives have unique features that make them especially suited to a certain group of society where dairy farming is a major source of livelihood for the people (Table 2). They have great potential to facilitate the state's socio-economic development and significantly contribute to improving the living standard of the poor.[45] Hence, in their pursuit of development, one can see clearly that the principles of Gandhi's *Village Swaraj*, such as self-sufficiency, equity, decentralization, cooperation, the importance of vocational education, etc., are reflected in the developmental spirit of SJDUSS. SJDUSS has led the white revolution in Assam, and therefore, SJDUSS wants to see Assam be self-reliant on milk production and try to transform society with modern technologies for better performances.

The principles of *Sarvodaya* are based on non-violence and equality. Gandhiji's notion of *Sarvodaya* regarding socio-economic development has certain principles similar to the ideals of SJDUSS. Gandhiji urged people to support agriculture and dairy cooperatives for their development and to promote our national interests. SJDUSS emphasizes empowering and developing individuals in the line of *Sarvodaya* which envisions a simple, non-violent, and decentralised society. Egalitarianism is at the heart of the *Sarvodaya* concept, as it believes in the ideals of true equality and liberty.

Similarly, SJDUSS was created to entrust powers to the people. The people have equal rights and liberty to express their own opinions

and make decisions. The objective of *Sarvodaya* is to eliminate the oppressive and exploitation-based governing system. The foundational basis of establishing the SJDUSS was to remove the middlemen and their oppressive role in the milk market, in which they are successful to a great extent. The dairy farmers of the region came together to form the cooperative society to fight against oppression in a non-violent way and thus successfully established the SJDUSS. As their means of attaining the goal were according to the ideals of Gandhi's *Sarvodaya*, it is not impractical to say that the Gandhian ideals of *Sarvodaya* are well reflected in the founding principles of SJDUSS.

The Gandhian notion of *Sarvodaya* holds the view that people would become more self-reliant and create new self-governing institutions when the stateless society develops. Instead of creating new self-governing institutions, people should try to create institutions that would help them empower themselves and be self-reliant, along with aid from the state. In consonance with this Gandhian ideal, SJDUSS has encouraged people to participate in the development process by making them aware of their rights and duties while being self-empowered and self-reliant. SJDUSS has profoundly contributed to rural development with the help of Gandhian ideals. It provides an ecosystem in which the farmers flourish, and SJDUSS has become a harbinger for rural development.

Conclusion

SJDUSS was created to entrust powers to the hands of the people. It is seen that the principles of Gandhi's Village *Swaraj*, such as self-sufficiency, equity, decentralization, cooperation, the importance of vocational education, etc., are profoundly reflected in the developmental spirit of SJDUSS. It encourages people to participate equally, understand their grievances, and solve them accordingly. People have equal rights and liberty to express their opinions freely and make decisions. In pursuit of the objective of *Sarvodaya*, establishing SJDUSS was to remove the middlemen and their oppressive role in the dairy market. The dairy farmers of the region came together to form the cooperative society to fight against the oppression in a non-violent way.

SJDUSS organizes training camps where people can enhance skill-based knowledge regarding dairying and cattle rearing. Every individual to be self-sufficient enough which can also indirectly contribute to the development of the society is the core objective of such training camps. It means attaining the goal of Gandhi's *Sarvodaya*.

SJDUSS has been encouraging people to participate in the development process by making them aware of their rights and duties

as individuals while being self-empowered and self-reliant. Dairy farmers are now more conscious about their issues, and co-operatively, they have come up with ways to address their issues while at the same time availing themselves of the resources and benefits provided by government policies and schemes. *Sarvodaya* advocates for self-sufficient village communities[46] , and SJDUSS also tries to make their 'farmer-community'[47] self-sufficient through dairy farming and hence, aiding in the whole rural development process. Thus, in this context, the ideals of *Sarvodaya* are very relevant in today's society in pursuit of the development of men and society as a whole. Just as *J. P. Narayan* says, *Sarvodaya* is a symbol of the highest societal values, hence, the institutions following the fundamentals of *Sarvodaya* always try to uphold societal justice and equity among themselves for its development.[48] Therefore, establishment of the cooperative societies with the Gandhian character in them can be said to be another alternative way to the nation's development from the very grassroots level.

Dairy cooperative society has become an important secondary source of income for many rural families and has assumed the most important role in providing employment and income-generating opportunities, particularly for women and marginal farmers in the region. Rapidly growing markets for livestock products in general, and dairy products in particular (owing to the rise in per capita incomes) are opening new avenues for enhancing rural incomes. Dairy farming plays a significant role in sustaining rural livelihoods, although the phenomenon of unemployment, migration, and malnutrition, ill health are widely prevalent in rural Assam. For instance, SJDUSS plays a very crucial role in addressing such challenges from the grassroots level. Dairy cooperative society is now becoming a promising source of rural livelihood. Therefore, SJDUSS, a dairy cooperative society is creating a pathway for rural development in the region particularly and Assam in general.

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Ethnicity, Religion, and Language: Locating Nationalism and Nation in the Political Thought of Bal Gangadhar Tilak

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ABSTRACT

Cultural nationalism is a variant of ethnic nationalism, and in Tilak's thoughts, there was a fusion of cultural, ethnic, and religious nationalism. Tilak endorsed the Indo-Aryan culture to proclaim the ethnic identity of Hindus for social assimilation, which was necessary to articulate a movement for political autonomy. He was a political pragmatist and shrewd strategist. He constantly shifted his stand on what represents India and lacked consistency in his ideas. His thoughts underwent paradigm shifts over the decades. His nationalist thoughts must be examined in three major timelines to understand them: from 1875 to 1890, 1891 to 1907, and 1914 to 1920. Tilak emphasised not only developing common characters for all Indian languages but eventually developing a common national language. The present paper tries to analyse the nationalist political narratives of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and how he employed resources such as ethnicity, religion, and language to construct the idea of nationalism and nationalism for colonized Indian society.

Key words: *Culture, Ethnicity, Language, Nationalism, Religion.*

ETHNICITY, RELIGION, AND language play an essential role in constructing ideas, nationalism, and nation. Ethnicity, in the context of nationalism, is consistently labelled as the marker of national identity in modern times. Nationalism and ethnicisation are inter-related phenomena, attempted when the political and the ethnic

borders of a nation are not harmonious. Indian nationalism is an ethnocultural movement endorsed by the social elites of nineteenth-century India who attempted to create an ethnic identity with determinants like common ancestry, shared history, distinct culture, territorial associations, and active solidarity. Although all aspired for self-determination, they had ideological differences among them. Moderates propounded constitutional means of resistance and civic nationalism, while extremists adhered to cultural nationalism and extra-constitutional means for decolonisation. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a firebrand nationalist, was hailed by extremists and cultural nationalists as their ultimate leader. He expanded the scope of the national movement from an intellectual exercise of a tiny elite segment of Congress into a mass movement to overthrow colonisation. The present paper makes an effort to analyse the nationalist political narratives of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and how he employed resources such as ethnicity, religion, and language to construct ideas of nationalism and nationalism for the colonized Indian society.

Nationalism and Ethnic Consciousness

Cultural nationalism is a variant of ethnic nationalism, and in Tilak's thoughts, there was a fusion of cultural, ethnic, and religious nationalism. Ethnicisation or racialisation, is a socio-political movement directed by elites to revive and eulogise ethnic myths to construct ethnocultural consciousness and brotherhood for nation-building, community autonomy, decolonisation, and self-determination. Ethnicity includes religion, language, customs, institutions, music, art, food, dress, colour, and territory. It is the interrelation between these indicators which defines an ethnic identity[1]. Constructivists believe that 'nations are not anything real, objective, or indispensable; they are only "constructs," contingent and artificial, deliberately created by various elites'[2]. Since 1860, Hindu cultural elements such as folklore, symbols, and other artifacts were revived and mainstreamed for political mobilisation and to delineate the Hindu ethnic identity of India. South Asian states lack ethno-cultural homogeneity, which affects their mass mobilisation and unification[3]. Hence, the Indian nationalists attempted to discover linkages through Hindu revivalism to construct a homogeneous society that imposed subordination on 'others' who did not belong to this categorisation. 'By avoiding reference to Muslims, these nationalist thinkers seemed to have clearly identified the constituents of the proposed nation'[4]. When attempts were made to diminish the fundamentals of Islamic identity, Muslim revivalism evolved as a reaction to it. Tilak belonged to the socio-politically active Chitpavan Brahmin community of Maharashtra and was induced by

these developments. On glorification of Hindu identity and antagonisation of Islamic beliefs, Mujahid writes:

> On the religious plane, it was represented by the most virulent, fundamentalist, and missionary movement of the Arya Samaj, launched by Dayananda Saraswati (1827-83) in 1875; on the cultural plane by the Hindu Mela (Calcutta, 1867-70) which gave birth to the Bharata Varta National Society (f. 1870), the Gaurakshini (cow-protection) Sabhas (f. 1883), Hindi Shitya Sammelan (1870s), and Nagari Pracharni Sabha (1893)...[5]

Tilak gave a political dimension to these developments. He sought to revive the glory of the Marathas and the valour of Shivaji to establish *Hindu Pad Padshahi* [6]. The public celebration of the Shivaji festival and Ganesh festival was organised more to develop an anti-muslim environment than for spiritual assimilations[7].

The idea of India as a nation-state between 1850-1880 was carved out of the social, cultural, and religious traits of Hindus and Hinduism, which attempted to develop an artificial homogeneity with selective inclusion or exclusion of past memoirs and cultural ingredients in a naturally heterogeneous subcontinent. The national awakening in nineteenth-century India is usually termed as a renaissance or revival. But beyond this, a consciousness of belonging to a nation was born.[8] Through Tilak, these embryonic socio-cultural ideas became politically mature.

Tilak was not a political philosopher in the true sense. He did not develop a vision for a politically ideal society. He does not discuss the best state, such as Plato and Aristotle, nor a perfect state, such as Hegel and Bosanquet[9]. He constantly shifted his stand on what represents India and lacked consistency in his ideas. His thoughts underwent paradigm shifts over the decades. His nationalist thoughts must be examined in three major timelines to understand them, from 1875 to 1890, 1891 to 1907, and 1914 to 1920.

Between 1875 and 1890, Tilak's political activism was restricted to re-establish Maharashtra's Brahminic socio-political and economic hegemony. He was an ardent defender of caste-based divisions, patriarchy, and other social prejudices. Tilak maintained a conservative stand when he opposed the Age of Consent Bill for women's empowerment[10]. In *Kesari* and *Maratha*, he criticised Malabari and other social reformers over the Age of Consent Bill by quoting Shastras[11]. His notion of nationalism was tantamount to the polity administered under the Brahminical code. Because of his detrimental thoughts, his aura remained limited to Maharashtra during this phase. Even within

Maharashtra, educated Brahmins and Dalit-Bahujan reformers challenged his assertions.

Between 1890 and 1907, Tilak minimised his campaign for Brahminical ascendancy, relatively diminished his social conservatism, and began to campaign for social equality among Hindus. He advocated political liberalism and national fraternity among Hindus. From Brahminical hegemony, he proceeded to Hindu cultural nationalism. During the last phase, from 1914 till his death in 1920, Tilak freed himself from social prejudices and discriminatory beliefs. From a leader of conservatives and extremists, he became a secular-democratic leader. He modified his definition of Swaraj from complete independence to home rule. He relinquished the anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Culture as the Element of National Identity

Tilak endorsed the Indo-Aryan culture to proclaim the ethnic identity of Hindus for social assimilation, which was necessary to articulate a movement for political autonomy. His nationalism had a revivalist orientation influenced by the Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century. While he actively defended the continuation of traditions, he sometimes criticised them as dogmas. The former act glorifies traditions as emblems of identity and pride. The latter aimed to promote rationalism in India in a European way. 'The historical cultural discoveries of the early orientalists,… regarding the Aryan myth, the Sanskrit language, and the sacred texts, laid the foundation for all subsequent cultural, nationalist articulations in the subcontinent'[12].

Initially, Tilak endorsed casteist jingoism in the name of Marathi nationalism and asserted that re-establishing Brahminic order should be the ultimate objective of the national movement. He asked Brahmins to forget the notion of equality of mankind and to pursue their self-interest[13]. To him, meticulous adherence to the medieval Hindu order is the message of nationalism, and any other form of body politic and social reforms would be detrimental to the progress and culture of India. In his thoughts, caste was a non-negotiable factor.

In the nineteenth century, the social services of Christian missionaries, British-backed social reforms, the rise of Dalit-Bahujan activism, and the spread of English education had improved the status of lower castes and other weaker sections of society. They exposed the social and economic disabilities imposed by the caste hierarchy and religious orthodoxy. Anti-Brahminic movements flourished under the leadership of reformers like Jyotiba Phule, Narayan Guru, Ghasi Das, Iyothee Dass, and others. Initially, the high-caste elites used British imperialism to strengthen their dominance over the marginalised communities. Eventually, this dominance was challenged by subaltern

Dalit intellectuals like Phule and Ambedkar[14]. 'Refusal to perform the customary slave labour, aspirations and attempts to diversify occupation and particularly to escape the ascriptive status became endemic among the lower castes, signalling the advent of the new era'[15]. By challenging the traditional obligations, bonded labour, agrestic slaves, peasants, and attached menial workers were demonstrating that the times had changed[16]. The religious renaissance in India became a reason behind the renewed strength of Hindu orthodoxy in the nineteenth century[17].

Fearing the fall of the conventional set-up of society, Tilak opposed the admission of Mahar and Mang children in schools as they were 'socially marginalised'. He opposed the academic demand made by reformers to simplify Sanskrit and Mathematics papers for Matriculation and Bachelor of Arts (B.A). This approach was directed to maximise the scope of students from non-literate backgrounds and lower castes in higher education. To restrict the reach of such students, in 1881, Tilak asked Bombay University to convert the three-year degree courses into four-year degree courses[18]. Though he condemned the practice of untouchability in public, he 'did not sign a memorandum to remove untouchability and thereby disappointed the organizers of a conference of the Depressed Classes'[19].

He also opposed girls' education by claiming that learning English would make women and girls lose their nationality. This kind of education would make them immoral and insubordinate, destroying their traditional values[20]. He had to fight on two fronts: firstly, against Hindu reformers, many of whom were educated Brahmins, and secondly, against the British for 'interfering' in the internal matters of Hindus. The British policies were shifting the flow of social capital from *savarnas*[21] towards *avarnas*[22].

> In 1853 the patronage system of employment was abolished. In 1854 Wood's despatch revealed the fact that education was not percolating and emphasized the need for mass education. In 1861 the new criminal law, based on the principle of rule of law replaced the Varna-based Gentoo Code of 1776, thus ending Brahminic pre-eminence in judicial matters. In 1870 the government decided to give priority to vernacular education. In 1872 Hunter stressed the need for Muslim education. Tired of waiting for upper caste candidates, in the post-Mutiny period missionaries turned their attention to the education and upliftment of the lower castes[23].

Tilak's nationalism was a movement to retain the social status quo, preserve feudalism, annihilate the changing power relations within the society, and halt the progressive measures that aimed to improve the conditions of the subalterns.

Till 1900, the activism that engulfed Bengal and Maharashtra, constituted micro-nationalism, aspiring for regional autonomy. Thereafter, they started to unite for macro-nationalism, that is Indian Nationalism. The former were natural identities, while the latter was a 'construct'. The former has variables such as cultural homogeneity, common language, and shared history. The latter has variables such as sovereignty, common citizenship, and a uniform administrative and legal system[24]. Tilak played an essential role in uniting these sub-nationalist movements. His activism also inspired Bengali revolutionaries, and he seemed to have been in touch with Sri Aurobindo, who was secretly organising revolutionary activities[25].

Tilak joined the Indian National Congress, which eulogised Vedantic idealism, to further the interests of the Brahmin class, as it was initially viewed as the organisation of the upper strata of Hindu society. The stake of the class was the preservation of the old order [26]. 'The pervasive and persistent theme of their socio-cultural world-view is that of going back to tradition, which in the context meant social slavery for the lower caste masses'[27].

'Another contention of Tilak was reviving the prevalent feudal order during Peshwa's rule. Peshwas were Chitpavan Brahmins who reinforced *Varnashram dharma*[28]. In 'Maharashtra the moneylenders happened to be *Chitpavans* in many cases and *Kunbis* were changing into hired labourers working on their own fields'[29]. With the fall of Peshwas in 1818, the social structure began to change rapidly. Lower castes and peasants started to challenge casteism and feudalism. During 1876-78, in the Deccan Revolt, the peasants attacked moneylenders, many of whom were Brahmins. Tilak opposed the revolt, stating that only true nationalists uphold *varnashram dharma* and that caste alone is the basis of the Hindu nation. When the British government enacted the Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act in 1879, which exempted the attachment of the tools and lands of peasants in case of debt and abolished imprisonment for non-payment of debt, Tilak started to oppose the act. He declared that moneylenders are like gods to peasants. He resisted the act and asked them not to lend money to peasants[30]. When Ranade and Wedderburn put forth the proposal to establish an Agricultural Bank to provide loans to peasants at a lower rate of interest as moneylenders were charging heavy interest on loans, Tilak, to protect the interests of moneylenders, criticised and opposed the proposal. Due to his rigorous resistance, the proposal for the Bank failed. He blamed Ranade for betraying caste interests and dividing the Chitpavan community[31]. Tilak did not find the caste system inconsistent with the process of modernisation. He justified its continuation by comparing it to the European system

of guilds and considered it essential to prevent the alienation of individuals[32].

After 1891, Tilak transformed his contentions from regional Brahminic nationalism to Pan-Indian Hindu cultural nationalism. His definition of national culture and cultural nationalism was restricted to Hindus, Hinduism, Hindu culture, and Hindi language. From casteist sentimentalism, he moved towards a religious nationalism with a realist approach.

For cultural nationalist thinkers like Aurobindo, India is the incarnation of the goddess *Kali*. His philosophy constituted metaphysical abstractions. But, in Tilak's nationalism, there was admiration for Shivaji, Nana Fadnavis, and the Ganesh festival. Bengali nationalism represented emotionalism and imagination, while in Maharashtra, common sense and pragmatism dominated[33]. Tilak viewed Nationalism as a religion of the public. The influence of Rousseau's Civic religion on Tilak is visible here. Rousseau 'envisioned a religion of sociability, a religion of the citizen, whose contents were not the dogmas of traditional religions, but rather the sentiments of sociability that all citizens should have'[34].

After his release in 1914, Tilak propounded pluralistic, multireligious, and civic nationalism in his teachings. Despite calling Gokhale his political guru, Gandhi developed his mass movement on the foundation laid by Tilak[35]. Tilak once visited the house of a 'lower caste person' during the Ganesh procession to show his disagreement with untouchability. In 1918, while addressing a special conference for the untouchables in Bombay, he said, 'If God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognise him as God at all…'[36].

Tilak also changed his contestation about India's proletariat class of peasants and farmers. Earlier, he had opposed reforms such as the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act of 1879 and the Agricultural Bank. Tilak started supporting socialist thoughts and upheld the rights of the peasants. In 1896, during the famine-like condition in Deccan due to a failed monsoon, Tilak pressurised the government to grant remission or suspend land revenue assessment because of crop failure. He said that those who cannot pay should not pay the assessment. Tilak was seen moving to the left during the last years of his life[37]. He supported the railway strike of 638 members in 1899, supported the postal peon strike for higher wages, and addressed many labour rallies between 1907 and 1908. When he was exiled to Mandalay in 1908, Bombay city was paralysed as 85 mills remained shut for six days as workers joined *hartal* (the action of suspending work). On 23 July 1908, around one lakh workers joined the strike, challenging his conviction[38]. Tilak was the first Indian leader to present Karl Marx

and his conception of class conflict to India[39]. 'Tilak had a genuine interest in socialist thought', the articles he wrote supporting the cause of agricultural labourers and industrial workers in the *Kesari* proves the argument.[40]

Muslims and Tilak's Nationalism

Initially, Tilak retained an anti-Muslim tirade to fuel his ethnonationalism. Dwelling in the legacy of the *Hindavi swarajya*[41] of Marathas, he painted Muslims as the enemy of India and an immediate danger to national identity. Between 1890 to1900 there were multiple communal riots in Maharashtra. Tilak and his associates' names were frequently reported as perpetrators. He asserted that Muslims were aggressors, fanatics, and jealous of the Hindus. Hindus were vulnerable in front of them as the British system deliberately acted in their favour. Tilak often cited the Rigvedic passage *ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti* which means that the ultimate truth (God) is one, though understood differently by individuals. However, in practice, he advocated sectarianism[42].

In 1893, there were communal clashes in Bombay. Tilak, in *Mahratta*, attacked Muslims assembling at Jumma Masjid as the cause of riots. He wrote in *Mahratta*, 'The Jumma Masjid holds nearly 6000 people and it is highly dangerous that 6000 roughs should be allowed to assemble there… under the ostensible purpose of worshipping without any notice to the police'[43]. He asked Hindus to counterattack not only for self-defence but to teach a lesson to Mahomedans.

On 18 September 1893, there were riots in Yeola. The Patel Mosque and Muralidhar temple were vandalised. Tilak blamed the Muslims of Yeola and their aggression for communal tensions:

> The first serious communal riot to which we need to refer occurred in Bombay in 1893. Tilak at that time was on the warpath. He had not yet revived the Ganpati festival which later did so much to inflame communal feelings, but his speeches had already taken on an anti-Muslim tone and the tension between the two communities was growing[44].

The Mamlatdar, looking into the matter, claimed that certain Hindus attacked both of these religious places. In response, Tilak blamed the British administration and moderates for hiding the aggressive acts of Muslims. 'N.C. Kelkar, an associate of Tilak… notes in his biography that the Ganapati festival was proposed as a means to consolidate the Hindu community in a private talk with Tilak and M.B. Namjoshi shortly after the communal riots of 1893'[45]. When the district administration invited 12 representatives of both communities

and concluded the compromise between them for peace and harmony in Yeola, Tilak saw the compromise as one-sided. He opposed the ruling of the administration, which asked Hindus to stop the music in front of the mosque during processions. He asserted that the Hindu nation has nothing to do with Mohammedans and asked Hindus to boycott them socially[46].

Before 1890, Hindus would participate in Muslims' processions. However, between 1890 and 1900, the communal divide widened, the Ganapati festival became highly popular, communal riots increased, and Hindu participation in Muslim festivals decreased. It was believed that Tilak provided perspiration and publicity to the Ganesh festival[47]. Tilak often stated that the occasion of Shivaji killing Afzal Khan is something every Hindu must rejoice. Such articulations widened the chasm between Hindus and Muslims. In Pune, the Ganesh festival was politicised:

> The proximity of the riots to the Ganapati utsava injected fervour into the desire to organize Hindus to celebrate their festival on a grand scale. Tilak wrote about the public festival, giving his full support to the celebrations as a vehicle to consolidate indigenous, or perhaps more appropriately Hindu, political consciousness[48].

After 1914, Tilak engaged in a secular approach when 'he became involved with processes of expediting Hindu-Muslim understanding in the twentieth century'[49]. He supported communal representation for Muslims as minorities and the Khilafat movement. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 between Congress and the Muslim League was successful due to his efforts. Ansari argued that Tilak's position during the Lucknow Pact was 'notable for liberality and large-mindedness towards the Muslims'[50].

Regarding Muslims, he held that irrespective of religious and linguistic differences, the inner man is the same[51] and they are as Indians as Hindus. This is why many Muslim leaders like M. A. Jinnah and M. A. Ansari stood by his side. Shaukat Ali said, 'I would like to mention again for the hundredth time that both Mahomed Ali and myself belonged and still belong to Lokamanya Tilak's political party'[52]. Hasarat Mohani claimed, 'I even at that early age, chose the Lokamanya as the ideal Leader for me…'[53]. Hasan Imam called Tilak his father in Indian politics[54]. In 1917, there were communal riots in the Arrah region of Bihar. M.K. Gandhi and Tilak recognised the miseries faced by Muslims in the region and blamed the Hindu mob for the excess. Other Congressmen neither recognised the incident nor condemned it[55].

In the Sedition Committee Report of 1918, it was mentioned that the Ganesh festival was not intended to be anti-Muslim. The District Superintendent of Police of Nasik, in his report on the Ganapati Procession of 3 September 1895, claimed that many 'Musalmans attended the procession, and… most musicians of the many bands accompanying the procession were Musalmans'[56].

Tilak's articulations changed because, after 1914, he started losing popularity. The public interest in Ganesh and Shivaji festivals had died out, and the *Kesari* and *Mahratta* were in their fragile phase[57]. He also changed the symbolic meaning of Shivaji. In his article *Is Shivaji a National Hero,* he held that it is 'not the alien or the foreign character of Mughal state that is projected as reasons for Shivaji's resistance, but its degeneration into tyranny and oppression'[58].

Hinduism as the Element of National Identity

Colonial scholars described colonies as backward societies incapable of changing the social dynamics necessary to transform them into industrial nations. Therefore, nationalists aimed to overcome these numerous social attachments and build the nation as the only legitimate institution of political loyalty[59]. Tilak viewed Hinduism as the moral force for the national regeneration of India. Early glimpses of *Hindudesha*[60] philosophy can be traced in his thoughts. Rather than accepting the Western narrative of Hinduism as a set of unorganised ways of life, he attempted to develop political Hinduism as an organised civic religion. The Western narrative had oversimplified Hinduism, broke its cadaver, restricted it to a personal affair of conscience, and forbade it from developing a political consciousness among natives. He believed that unless various sects within the Hindu fold unite and develop social cohesion, national imagination will not materialise.

Various Dharma Sabhas (Divine Societies) for the cause of Sanatan dharma and to oppose missionary and reform activities sprang up in India in 1831 when the first Dharma Sabha was founded in Calcutta. A pan-Hindu organisation Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was founded by Pandit Deendayalu Sharma[61]. The main objectives of the Mahamandala were to propagate Hinduism based on sacred texts and varnashrama dharma, to unite various Hindu sects, to establish educational institutions and libraries for the preservation and teaching of Sanskrit texts, and to promote Hindi as the language for education and administration[62]. Though this body succeeded to some extent in uniting various Hindu Sabhas, it lacked a strong political methodology. Inspired by these *savarna*-centric institutions, Tilak developed his idea of India based on Hinduism.

He asserted that all sects are different branches of the same Sanatan dharma. It is the religion of Aryans and is as ancient as human history. Such rhetoric was necessary to 'construct' the racial-ethnic identity of the Hindu nation. Hindus cannot hope to rise as a nation without brotherhood and pan-India consciousness. He used religious revivalism tactics for political mobilisation of the masses. However, after 1914, he became a staunch supporter of the polyethnic secular nationalism pioneered by liberal ideals. He started to use Hinduism more to provide an ethnic identity to India than as a religious identity and surrendered his efforts to construct a theocratic nation.

Tilak's project of Hindu nation intended to popularise the religious identity and connect it with body politic. For this, he relied on historical myths and extremist means of political activism. Exploring the notion of a Hindu nation, Tilak observed:

> Hindu religion as such provides for a moral as well as social tie. This being our definition we must go back to the past and see how it was worked out. During Vedic times India was a self-contained country. It was united as a great nation. That unity has disappeared bringing on us great degradation, and it becomes the duty of the leaders to revive that union[63].

He argued for homogenisation and wanted Hindus to forget minor differences which exist between them in the form of sects to emerge as a mighty Hindu nation [64]. His thought carried a racial canopy necessary for stronger homogenisation, centralisation, and ethnicisation. 'Some important writings of Tilak such as T*he Orion*,.. *The Artic Home in Vedas*, *Srimad Bhagavad Gita Rahasya*,... *Vedic Chronology and Vedanta Jyotish*, were specifically meant to constitute a kind of legitimacy and authenticity for the antiquity of India'[65]. Tilak in his works *Orion* and *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, 'proved that the antiquity of the Vedas goes back nearly 5,000 years B.C. and that the original Aryan race came from the North Polar regions which were at one time habitable'[66]. As per the Rigvedic verse VIII. 46. 28, dog was a pet domestic animal used as a beast of burden, similar to its use in the polar region[67]. Tilak synthesised archaic primordialism with politicised devotionalism[68]. Hindu nation as a primordial idea evolved in conjunction with the nation's evolutionary, physiological, and metaphysical notions. Aryanism, an element of national antiquity, was the synthesis influenced by British and German orientalism and social elitism[69]. Since the eighteenth century, in the context of the construction of the antiquity of the nation which was known by various names like Aryan, Indo-Aryan, Hindu etcetera came to be identified with the

Sanskritic/Vedic Brahminism. Indo-Aryans, who were a branch of Nordic races of the Northern Hemisphere, were considered to have brought 'civilization' to this land[70].

Like Vivekananda and Gandhi, Tilak emphasised how Indian civilisation is different and superior to the West. Western societies are materialistic, individualist (negatively), and non-spiritualist, whereas Hindu civilisation is spiritual, cultural, and collectivist. Tilak used revivalism and public celebration of Hindu religious practices i.e., Ganesh festival, to rationalise and materialise religious nationalism. He demeaned Muslims and their festivals, like Muharram, to strengthen Hinduism against Abrahamic faiths. He cited *Dharmashastras*[71] to legitimise Hindu India and insisted on abiding by Vedic ideals and behavioural codes as represented in the texts. The intention was to redefine Hindu civilisation in the political context. The *Advaita vedanta*[72] shaped his philosophy of national and individual liberty.

There is no agreement on the status of Tilak as a chauvinist Hindutva nationalist or a secular extremist. To a certain extent, the allegation can be said to be flawed on two grounds. Firstly, Tilak advocated Hindu nationalism and not Hindutva. There was no binary opposition between Gandhi and Tilak compared to Savarkar and Golw(a)lakar, or Jinnah and Maulana Mawadadi. In fact the emergence of democratic, secular… nation of modern India had its roots in Lokmanya Tilak's political ideology…'[73]. Secondly, Tilak's intention behind popularising the Bhagavad Gita in the political domain was not to communalise the nation-making movement but to rationalise political activism and preach Karma-yoga[74]. His commentary Gitarahasya, which he wrote during his years in Mandalay Jail, was detached from his communal and Brahminic temperament.

Tilak utilised the Bhagavad Gita because it was one of the sacred texts common to different sects of Hinduism. This would have helped him in pursuing communal unity among Hindus. The 'nationalists used many devices for mass mobilization. (T)he preaching of *Bhagwat Gita* was one such method, which the officials considered as causing greater mischief than even the more reckless extremist newspapers'[75]. Since activism had to take centre stage against passivism, Tilak blamed some earlier interpreters of the Gita and faiths, such as Buddhism and Jainism, for preaching passivism and renunciation to Indians beyond the limits of worldly life[76].

There was a paradigm shift in Tilak's thoughts after 1914. There was a steady decline in his communal tone, and from a communal nationalist, he re-surfaced as a secular nationalist. From Brahminical supremacy, he had moved towards liberal humanism. 'The man who

once wanted to prosecute G. G. Agarkar simply for writing that he (Tilak) took tea at the hands of a Portuguese waiter, was now openly taking tea prepared by a Muslim and served by a Muslim'[77]. He was also involved in Hindu-Muslim amity[78]. Some believe that Tilak was never an anti-Muslim inciter because of which educated Muslims supported him. When he was arrested in 1897 for writing seditious articles, his friends in Calcutta collected Rs. 16, 000 for his defence, of which Rs. 7000 were donated by a Muslim business firm of Hajee Ahmed & Hajee Hossain Hajee Abdal. The correspondence message from the firm was very emotional. 'The moment the Government arrested him, Mr. Tilak ceased to be a leader of the Hindu community. He is now above all castes, creeds, and religions. He is going to be prosecuted for his fight for India, the common motherland of the Muslims and Hindus'[79].

Tilak, after his release from Mandalay, had turned into a physically and emotionally weak man. After spending six long years in jail, Tilak preferred not to raise any volatile issue that could get him imprisoned again. Most cultural nationalists who worked with him earlier were either side-lined by the dominant moderate section of the Congress, while others like Aurobindo had voluntarily left political activism. At this time, Gandhi was emerging in Indian politics, who introduced a non-violent methodology of resistance. With his new approach to the freedom struggle, he achieved the support of the Congress members. Besides these, Tilak had other reasons to go mild on his Hindu nationalism. The Select Bureaucratic team headed by Lawrence Robertson, in its confidential noting, had mentioned the following challenges that would make it difficult for Tilak to regain his position: i) The perilous state of his financial conditions; ii) Imprisonment of six long years kept him ignorant about recent developments and popular feelings; iii) The popular movement that he had built over the past 20 years collapsed from its roots; iv) His newspapers *Kesari* and *Mahratta* lost their extremist competence due to the Press Act of 1910, and the Ganapati festival was not as politically popular as before[80].

The episodes of communal riots after 1890 started to decrease by the end of the century. The communal nature of the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals was replaced by the anti-British theme, and with new vigour, Hindus started participating in Muslim festivals. A few months before his death in 1920, Tilak replied to Paranjapye (the Principal of Fergusson College), who accused him of being a social reactionary, that the intention behind Shivaji and Ganesh festivals was not to strengthen orthodox prejudices but to retain pride in the traditions created by our ancestors. A change must be evolutionary and not

socially revolutionary. Similar movements were inaugurated in Scotland and Ireland for similar nationalist purposes[81]. He claimed that the Ganesh festival aimed at developing a sense of belonging among the people.[82]

Language as the Element of National Identity

Tilak's observations on language can be analysed on the basis of his speech delivered at Banaras at the Nagari Pracharni Sabha Conference in December 1905. Tilak emphasised on developing a common language for the whole of India [83]. He recognized the presence of linguistic diversity and the absence of a common language of communication in India as an obstacle to the development of national identity and solidarity. For him, no force was more powerful than a common language for national unity[84]. He was in favour of bringing together the different linguistic elements of India under a common language. He advocated common characters or scripts for Indian languages.

It seems that Tilak was bothered about the absence of linguistic unity in the country to overcome the problem of political colonialism. His prescriptions regarding the linguistic diversity and its inherent problems are more context-specific in the sense that post-colonial India has overcome the problems of linguistic diversity not by practicing uniformity but by celebrating diversity in the form of recognition of different languages and scripts. Various political streams in post-independent India, from right to left and from left to the centre, have recognized the strength of linguistic diversity for socio-political harmony. To add to this development, modern science, and technology have come as great facilitators in practicing linguistic diversity in the country.

The rumination on Tilak's ideas on nation and nationalism forces some comparison between the other votaries of nationalist struggle and thought process. In this regard, comparing Tilak with M.K. Gandhi would help in understanding the epistemology of nationalist thought. The reason for comparing Tilak with Gandhi is the similarity in their mass experiments and the difference in the realisation of ideas. Gandhi entered Indian politics informally in 1915, a few months after Tilak's release from Mandalay jail. There were conformity and contradictions in the thoughts of these leaders of the masses. They both believed in the spirit of swaraj, which was beyond mere freedom from colonisation, and recognised the role of the masses in the struggle against oppressors. Gandhi, to some extent, can be regarded as the successor to Tilak in Indian politics as he developed his method of mass movements on the foundation led by Tilak[85]. Like Tilak, he emphasised the principles

of *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, boycott, and national education[86]. One of Gandhi's biggest contributions to the national movement lies in his efforts to unite Hindus and Muslims, Western and Eastern wisdom, Moderates and Extremists, politics, spirituality, or religion.

Still, there were paradoxes in values and ideological commitments, which were evident in both of their thoughts. Though Tilak did not outrightly propound militancy and terrorism, he genuinely believed that violence in some form would be necessary to attain *swaraj*. Gandhi advocated the supremacy of means over ends and condemned violence in every form. He declared G. K. Gokhale, the leader of the moderate faction of Congress, as his political teacher or *guru*. Though both used the Bhagavad Gita in the context of a national movement, they ended up at different conclusions. Gandhi believed that Gita preached the message of detachment and selfless performance in one's duties. To him, the preachings of Gita are inconsistent with acts of violence[87]. Tilak preached *Karma-yoga* (life of activism) in Gita Rahasya, his commentary on Bhagavad Gita. Though an outer reading may make his views appear unobjectionable, he interpreted it to rationalise political activism and consequent violence. He asserted that, like Krishna sought Arjuna to fight against unjust Kauravas, Hindus should fight against the British by violence if needed to attain swaraj[88]. In 1897, during his speech in Pune, Krishna asserted that, as Krishna mentions in Gita, no blame attaches to a person if he performs his duty without any attachment to the fruit of his deeds. He further added that people should think beyond the Penal Code and commit to the extreme atmosphere of performing necessary actions[89]. Gandhi was sceptical of Tilak's attitude on certain matters. He believed that for Tilak, the nation is the only identity. Hence, according to Gandhi, Tilak did not believe in God as he had no faith in truth and non-violence[90].

In the pre-Gandhian era, the politics of nationalism was heavily influenced by provincialism, with Maharashtra and Bengal being its hotspots. Gandhi gave the movement a true pan-Indian scope by shifting its hub to the Hindi belt as well as taking a movement to rural corners of India. His saintly (*sanyasi*) appearance convinced rural-backward Indians to relate themselves with the emerging nations, as Gandhi was able to define his leadership as non-elitist. While Tilak's Hindu nationalism promoted militancy, distrust, and religious sectarianism, Gandhi's Hind Swaraj attempted to spiritualise nationalism by bridging the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Tilak eulogised Shivaji as a 'Hindu' king, simultaneously demonising Islamic rule and kings. On the other hand, Gandhi saw Islamic rule in India as an integral part of Indian history. He believed that though Muslim

rulers invaded India as aliens and barbarians, over time, they adopted Indic values of peaceful existence and treated this country as their home. Hindus and Muslims largely lived a peaceful life during the reign of the Mughals. He adored Akbar as the greatest tolerant king and asserted that the British drew a false image of Aurangzeb as a fanatic anti-Hindu ruler[91].

Before Gandhi, militancy and the cult of violence had given the wilderness to national identity. Such wilderness would have been eccentric to any contemporary humanistic society. Gandhi's entry into politics weakened the celebration of violence in the name of national pride as he shifted the focus from violence to self-sacrifice. He was critical of Tilak and Mrs. Annie Besant for driving youth towards anarchy and violence[92]. He tamed and domesticated the force of nationalism and shifted its focus from the masculine urge to protect and control land to the spiritual urge to revere collective good and the spiritualisation of politics. From nationalism as politics for power in the pre-Gandhian era, in Gandhian thought, nationalism emerged as a social philosophy of general will and *Sarvodaya* (welfare of all). While Hindu nationalists like Tilak viewed the cow as a symbol of Hindu nationhood and demanded a ban on its killing, Gandhi recognised the cow protection more in the form of compassion towards living creatures and a symbol of *ahimsa* or non-violence. Followers of Tilak viewed Gandhi's emphasis on *satyagraha* and *ahimsa* as a weapon against British imperialism as a purely utopian tactic. In the mid-1930s, Savarkar emerged as a staunch supporter of violence and a major opponent of Gandhian pacifism. Godse, the assassin of Gandhi, stated that Tilak and Savarkar held identical views[93].

Conclusion

Tilak remained one of the most controversial and popular leaders of his time. Scholars appreciate his role in popularising the self-determination movement by pushing it beyond the walls of Congress. As a pragmatist, he repeatedly modified his definition of what represents India. From caste aspirations and conservatism, one can see him shifting to civic nationalism, political liberalism, and universal egalitarianism among the nations. He provided a cultural identity to the national movement. Though his political and life journey ended in 1920, his legacy and works were continued by his successors despite them following diverse approaches to politics and freedom struggle.

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Analysing Killings in Situations of Pernicious Political Polarisation from a Peace Studies Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper takes up some cases of extreme political violence involving political parties in the Third World in a comparative manner, drawing on a broad perspective on peace studies. The cases referred to will not be of an ethnic nature or synonymous with class war. These are instances of political violence between adherents of rival parties, either in connection with elections or for maintaining the hegemony or the support base of the party concerned. While election-related violence between parties can sometimes assume an ethnic character, as in Kenya, this paper is concerned with political violence involving members of the same community and class along partisan lines. Examples of political violence are drawn from Asia and Africa with emphasis on the violence in North Malabar, Kerala.

Key words: *Political violence, killing, polarization, political parties, peace initiatives*

Introduction

ONE OF THE PITFALLS of democracies is the need for continuous renewal to ensure that there is no backsliding. That even long-standing democracies like the US has become highly polarized in character in recent years is quite worrying, more so because of the willingness to engage opponents violently as one witnessed following the Trump defeat on the Capitol Hills. This paper discusses few cases of political violence from the developing countries and attempts to explore their nature and ways and means by which they can be moderated or ended with particular focus on Northern Kerala.

Political Violence

Political violence has been seen as "a process through which people become increasingly motivated to use violent means against members of an out-group or symbolic targets to achieve behavioral change and political goals".[1] According to du Toit and Manganyi, political violence is distinguished from other types of violence by claims of a unique moral or public justification for the harm and injury done to others and by the representative nature of the agents and targets of these acts of violence. [2] By encouraging the demonization and dehumanisation of rival partisans, giving moralistic weight to people's judgements of them, and easing group mobilization—a prerequisite for political violence—polarization may heighten political violence. [3] Research on polarisation and political violence is unrelated primarily in the literature.[4]

Moral disengagement perpetuates the idea that outgroup members are less than human and should not be accorded the same respect, deference, empathy, protection, or just and humane treatment.[5] Dehumanisation that is bolstered by polarisation has the potential to normalise the use of violence and increase partisan acceptance of it. The type of violence one sees in places like Manipur is violence stemming from such dehumanization.

According to Powell, there are three main goals of political violence: altering the democratic bargaining process, undermining the regime's or its major parties' support, or intimidating the opposition in order to garner support.[6] "Direct" violence, also referred to as "personal violence," is overt, dynamic, and establishes a connection between the victim and a discernible aggressor; in contrast, structural, "indirect" violence is covert, static, and lacks a clear aggressor.[7]

Research indicates that political violence in the form of killings weakens the social fabric and overall climate of communities in two ways: (1) by controlling space and movement, it damages communities as shared physical locations of people, culture, and identity; and (2) by fostering a culture of collective fear and terror, destroying networks, and decreasing community organising efforts.[8] In the Indian context, besides political killings, political violence can mean a whole lot of other acts, such as intimidating voters and election officials, capturing polling booths with force, preventing voters from supporting rival parties from casting ballots, and forcing voters to cast proxies votes in favour of particular party symbols.[9]

Legitimacy and Dynamics of Political Violence

Since the legitimacy of political violence is crucial, as noted by Apter,[10] the groups involved will probably work hard to justify their actions. The legitimization of violence enables one to uphold a positive self-image and garner public support, both of which are crucial for the sustenance of the conflict. By using such divisive discursive strategies, as Apter suggests, "violence not only builds on itself but becomes both self-validating and self-sustaining."[11] Similar to this, Philip Smith analyses cultural justifications of political conflicts and contends that the narrative polarisation embodied in the unyielding antagonistic relationship between "heroes versus perpetrators" legitimises violence against specific perpetrators during political conflicts. In the unwavering battle against the "ultimate evil adversary," this process reverses the negative connotation of political conflict by legitimising violence for the purported "greater good" of the the party and all it represents.[12]

Julie M Norman says,

> ..perceptions of legitimacy regarding acts of violence depend on the eyes of the beholder, especially in terms of morality, with views on acts of political violence influenced by one's political sympathies and orientations. Indeed, if one views the target of violence as immoral or illegitimate, then violence becomes not only legitimate but also perhaps morally justified.[13]

According to Cassese, in-group/out-group dynamics have gone beyond simple othering to dehumanisation. Partisans on both sides of the political spectrum dehumanise their opponents in subtle ways, such as by attributing animalistic and mechanical traits, as well as more overt ways, such as by openly viewing them as less than human.[14] In the context of West Bengal, in a cognitive defence of their party, partisans are more likely to minimise the gravity of partisan violence and see such violence as acceptable—possibly even necessary—in a setting where elections are hotly contested.[15]

Another explanation could be that, even if they are generally sympathetic to the political cause, party members who consider themselves to be non-extremists on such issues could actively try to disassociate themselves from violent acts. In a scenario like this, one must assume that the other party is sincere in its desire to resolve the issue and won't intentionally try to deceive and cheat. A second component pertains to competence, defined as the ability of an individual, group, or organisation to perform the promised action or task.[16]

According to the martyrdom narrative, acts of violence and terrorism committed by members of the in-group against members of the out-group in the past or present are justified as noble, selfless deeds that further a greater good. Examples of martyrdom-related language and symbolism include references to categories such as "heroic martyrs," "resistance," "self-sacrifice," and "dying in glory."[17]

Groups in extreme partisan settings often seek cognitive consistency. These can lead to biased assimilation, where people evaluate the value of new information based on whether it contradicts or supports a desired conclusion; disconfirmation bias, where people actively create arguments against information that challenges a desired conclusion, and confirmation bias, where people selectively seek out and pay attention to information that coheres with a desired conclusion (such as their pre-existing belief). To maximise support and turnout among their most ardent supporters, partisan elites, regrettably, have political incentives to take advantage of the more divisive tactics of message framing.[18]

West Bengal

The Communist Party of India -Marxist, commonly known as CPI(M) achieved what it considered to be its main goal - to restrain the more overt manifestations of generalised violence. On a different level, however, the party established an entirely new dominance network that grew daily in Bengal. At this second level, the party with multiple extortion rings associated with it began to have the exclusive right to use violence in rural areas. The party stood as the intermediary in every sphere of social activity, entitling the state to be called a 'party society'. [19] The realpolitik combined with this degree of violence created the state's bloodstreams of power, which were represented by the party's numerous local and branch committees. This network of committees gave the Trinamool Congress (TMC) the critical backing it needed in small towns and rural areas when power ultimately transferred to the TMC[20]. Since then, the BJP was targeted mainly by the party and not the CPI(M).

Bengal Killings had a pattern. Small groups of young men select their victims and kill them quickly. One such instance is the assassination of Kartik Mahato, a 34-year-old member of the CPI(M) and a teacher at Boro Jamda High School in Salboni, close to Lalgarh, in 2009. Suspected Maoists rode up on bikes, walked into the classroom, and shot him in front of his students at close range. The intention behind this killing appears to have been to terrorise the public by carrying out the horrific act in front of young children in addition to wiping out a rival party activist.[21] The Kerala style of

killings also are similar in form and intent, but with some differences in the strategies and weapons used.

According to P. S. Banerjee: " The Left Front rule was systematically and meticulously directed towards consolidation of the dominance of a single party, i e, the CPI(M) at the expense of all opposition parties, even of junior LF partners, particularly in rural Bengal".[22] In his study, Atul Kohli says that political violence is a sign of political decay and that the lack of effective political institutions causes social conflict to be violently politicised rather than peacefully mediated.[23] Though not always seen, the CPI(M)'s violence in Bengal had some class connotations. William's research suggests that violence is necessary for building political support and serves as a crude but efficient means of defining the boundaries of who is allowed to be a part of specific "social forces" or excluded. Thus, the CPI(M)'s selectively initiated land struggles serve as significant local reminders of the disparate economic interests that the party exploits to reinforce class-based identity.[24] While many cases like Bengal, Kenya and KZN have high-intensity violence during elections, the case of Kannur is a more enduring and persisting one, which may only witness an occasional spurt during elections.

Violence in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)

South Africa has experienced political killings in KZN as its epicentre. People are killing when vying for positions and due to intra-party squabbles. Once you kill an incumbent, there will be a bye-election. It was mainly between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress, and now it is primarily an intra-party affair. Most killed belonged to the ANC. The capacity of the state is crucial in dealing with political killings. High-profile plotters were not arrested. Competition for positions and business interests were often advanced as reasons. Criminality comes from greedy people. A person wants a contract, threatens the councillor, and kills him/her when it is not received. So, contracts often go to criminal syndicates. There is a culture of criminality in ANC. Political parties have not educated the membership about democratic practices. Some councillors were killed by their former opponents who could not make it to the Council. The traditional leaders were also victims. Marumo Moerane commission was set up in this context. The commission report suggested that, to change the culture of intolerance, violence, and killings, political parties must collaborate with academic institutions, civil society organisations, religious organisations, the media, and other relevant institutions available in the locality and adhere to a code of conduct which prohibits using language capable of motivating killings.[25]

The most notable is how the leadership constantly talks about peace while escalating hostilities on the ground, even though the public is overwhelmingly in favour of talks. Consequently, it would be more accurate to characterise the violence as conspiratorial and unsettling in origin. They see through the leadership's advances. Extremists in Inkatha and on the right wing express similar views. Localised acts of aggression directed at the leaders and adherents of the different factions either result in prompt retaliation or the other side is taught a lesson by taking advantage of the numerous grievances. There were several reasons for that, including: (1) de Klerk's double standards and unreformed police; (2) a "third force" of right-wing elements in the security establishment determined to thwart the government's negotiation agenda; (3) the rivalry between Inkatha and the ANC, which was the result of an ambitious Buthelezi afraid of being sidelined instead of treated as an equal third party; (4) the ANC's campaign of armed struggle, ungovernability, and revolutionary intolerance; (5) deeply ingrained tribalism, released by the relaxation of white repression, leading to "black-on-black" violence; (6) the legacy of apartheid in general, migrancy, hostel conditions, and high unemployment among a generation of "lost youth." There was no single cause that led to the killings.[26]

During the 1980s and early 1990s, there was sever political conflict between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which resulted in the violent establishment of a geographical puzzle of party strongholds. Political allegiance to one of the rival parties evolved into a territorially-based nature. Eventually, the KZN violence was brought down through a peace accord, marginalising the extreme elements in the ANC and bringing Jacob Zuma, known as an exponent of Zulu culture, to take the lead. Formally acknowledging each other's right to exist and publicly denouncing violence, both parties established a number of committees consisting of ANC and IFP parliamentarians whose duty was to ensure that the agreement was upheld. This marked the beginning of the peace process.[27] All the major parties had engaged in intimidation and threats prior to the nation's first democratic elections in 1994, during which widespread violence broke out. In most regions, political violence subsided after the 1994 election; however, in KwaZulu-Natal, there are still occasional violent outbursts. An essential factor in easing the country's transition from apartheid to democratic government was the power sharing agreement.[28] The ANC and IFP were compelled to agree to a regional power-sharing arrangement after four rounds of mutually agreed-upon elections. According to Schuld, "Violence does not only directly prevent elections from being carried out in a free

and fair manner, it can also provide a background setting of fear and intimidation that influences voting patterns".[29]

Take the case of Sri Lanka. The popular Buddhism that has historically fuelled Sinhalese nationalism and the idea that wrongdoers should be punished is what gave rise to the violence of the JVP. Buddhist monks had a history of taking part in political violence, exemplified by the 1960 assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike following his agreement with Mr. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the Tamil people. The JVP executed its opponents with great brutality, beheading, dismembering, burning alive, and torturing the victims. Villagers falsely reported their rivals to the authorities as JVP sympathisers in order to use the insurrection as a tool to harm them and exact revenge or take their land. Despite this, women were not active in the JVP's military ranks and were rarely detained, assaulted, or killed. However, rape was often reported.[30]

Violence during elections is viewed as being incompatible with democracy, as the electoral process in such cases amounts to acting as a substitute for violence. [31]Political zoning is a tactic used by local elites to effectively prevent opposition candidates from campaigning in particular areas, resulting in echo chambers and evident animosity between regions. This is one aspect of political violence in Kenya and it has resemblance with demarcated zones of Kerala. In the case of Kenya, instead of a one-shot linear peace process as envisaged in liberal peacebuilding what took place was a kind of adaptive or 'perpetual peacebuilding.' The Kenyan example illustrates that there are no easy routes from violence to peace; rather, they require significant work by a wide range of actors. The role of the peacebuilder is not to achieve an end state of peace, but to act as 'critical friends' in the work towards a more peaceful order.[32]

Kannur political violence

Kannur political violence presents a different picture. It is the result of extreme political polarization and identity formation centred around it, which excludes the possibility of cross-cutting relations of a non-political nature with the adversaries. Kannur politics has close similarities with the ideas of Carl Schmitt. In his view, politics represents the purest and most extreme form of conflict, in which there are either friends or enemies. Schmitt believes that politics entails violence and the elimination of enemies.[33] The main contenders are CPI(M) and the RSS and the polarization is not along religious or caste lines. Most victims and perpetrators belong to the backward Thiya caste. Violence takes place in a tit-for-tat fashion and the victims are often not hardcore partymen. The extreme politicization leads to

a type of privatization of all aspects of life. The violence in the region is decentralised and localized in character. It is carried out with the help of crude bombs, swords and long knives. It is seldom that guns are used. This intensifies the gory nature of the act on the victims. Many have lost their limbs or are handicapped for life. Women are not involved as perpetrators, but experience the trauma of having lost their husbands, brothers or fathers for life. Many young people have lost their lives while making country bombs or during mishaps in handling them. Further, rape has never been used as part of violence.[34]

Unlike in Bengal, violence is territorially confined to the Kannur and Kasargod districts and has not spread to the Southern region except in some college campuses. Partisan identification is all-encompassing and influences generally non-political issues like marriage, friendship, faith and other forms of sociality. Such polarization is more affective in nature than ideological, although the ideology of secularism vs communalism is often advanced to take on the BJP. The vast majority of killings are carried out by partymen specialized in such acts or contracted to carry them out as has become common in recent times. The principals ordering the killings are seldom caught and enjoy impunity. So, it cannot be proven who actually masterminded the killings. Political socialization is predominantly a sort of induction into the violent culture of the party concerned, and family and school play only a marginal role. The violence is perpetuated with martyr's memorials and annual observances. Martyrs serve two purposes in the community: they strengthen the standing of their group within it and delegitimise the external enemy.[35]

Peace meetings have been a sham, and just an interlude between killings. They are organized by the District and Taluk-level bureaucracy and only political party representatives find a place in such meetings. It is a masculine affair and women's voices are never heard in such forums. Following a closed-door mediation by Sri M involving the high-ranking party leaders of both the camps, there has been a lull in political killings during the last five years. However, the background conditions for the recurrence of conflict exist in the rural areas.

Ending Political Violence

A third party to mediate disputes between parties when they find themselves in opposing positions are unable to engage each other directly is essential for handling conflict. This is the function of state institutions in contemporary societies. But when political polarisation is high, institutions are more likely to be perceived as partisan instruments of power than as impartial means of resolving disputes.

Violent incidents are more likely to happen when this is the case as the Kannur situation suggests. How does one end political violence? One problem lies with the deep culture of the region and the everyday language used by politicians. Since it implies that condoning violence is a necessary component of belonging, language that normalises violence within a group is particularly dangerous. The physical violence in Kannur is reinforced by cultural violence or beliefs that normalize and legitimise it by according heroic martyr status to the victims and the perpetrators. Leaders have a key role here. Encouraging the moderates willing to work across communities is needed. In extreme violence such people are marginalized or as seen as enemies. Law enforcement is crucial. Violence thrives in an atmosphere of lapse in law enforcement.

Gandhi referred to nonviolence as "soul force" (*atma bal or daya bal* in Gujarati) and violence as "brute force" (*sharir bal or top bal*). Nonviolence defines the boundary between the two, between the beastly and the human. The concept of brute force locates violence within the body and the tools the body can use to inflict harm or death. It suggests total instrumentality. Gandhi makes it abundantly evident that there is no conscience or normative consideration in the domain of the beastly wherein violence is located.[36] In the Kannur conflict, reconciliation was never seriously considered as a political goal and has never been infused into daily social interactions (even though the conflict hasn't been resolved). Reconciliation processes can hardly ever eliminate fear or the tangible effects of the past, and it is impossible to realise the dream of a peaceful future that transcends the shattered past.[37] In this context, it is worthwhile to bring up the notion of "selective perception," in which decision-makers frequently only notice things that confirm their preconceptions. Even conciliation by the other party is unlikely to be noticed once a conflict reaches a point of mutual recrimination and contentiousness. If it is, it will probably be discounted and seen as dishonest.[38]

Interventions in peacebuilding aimed at curbing political killings in Kerala ought to focus on party politics. This is so because political parties serve as both a vehicle for gaining political power and a setting for political indoctrination and education.[39] One can say that a certain degree of political astuteness is required in settings like Kannur where violence has received considerable legitimacy and positions have become hardened with identity of groups also constructed around such imagery. Research conducted by Hartley and colleagues with leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors defines political astuteness in terms of five dimensions of actions and behaviours in context. Personal skills like self-awareness, self-control, active

listening, openness to the experiences of others, and proactivity are among these dimensions. Interpersonal skills include influencing others without using direct authority, making others feel valued, negotiating effectively, and handling conflicts constructively. Reading people and situations to understand people's agendas, fears, power dynamics, and the individual's position towards all of them is another.[40]

A peace studies perspective will try to analyse the conflict, the changes that have taken place in terms of the nature of actors and issues and the possibility of entry by identifying actors who are amenable to reason without marginalising potential spoilers who stand in the way of peace making. It looks for ripe moments or hurting stalemates to gain an entry, although the conflict transformation school is skeptical about the usefulness of such scenarios. However, in situations where peacemaking is resisted by one or both parties, as the case may be, there is not much peace workers can do except on the educational front. Likewise, peace builders also attempt to prevent conflict from taking place. All these presuppose the existence of at least a threshold level of opinion in favour of peace. As opposed to the conflict management or conflict resolution approach, which tends to be more elitist in character, the conflict transformation framework has a holistic tenor about it. Conflict transformation behaviours could involve localised violence reduction programmes, intergroup activities that bridge the social divisions caused by conflicts, and contribute to self-and intracommunity education. They frequently rely on persuasive people and community organisers who can set an example locally referred to as "private peace entrepreneurs," or "private citizens with no political authority,"[41] who take part in pro-social or pro-peace actions on a micro level. Since conflict transformation frequently takes place at the local level, its drivers are frequently personal: people, or small groups of people, who wish to break the cycle of violence, radicalisation, or revenge and enhance the quality of life in their community. Our worldview shapes our understanding and the meaning we assign to the world. So, culture is one arena where work to contain violence must begin. Lederach talks about moral imagination to overcome such situations. The aim is to imagine and revitalise positive reactions and endeavours that, although grounded in the daily struggles of violent settings, outdo and eventually shatter the hold of those harming patterns and cycles.[42] Some forces profit from such ant-civilian violence and are responsible for neutralising the social perception against it and thereby normalise it.

Conclusion

Peace studies looks at peacebuilding largely in terms of post-conflict scenarios. At least this is what most theorists including the UN officially envisage. In the contexts we are examining, such scenarios of cessation of overt conflict may not exist, except as occasional interludes between one instance of violence and the other. The leader portrayed by the social identity theory is one who demonstrates a strong sense of ingroup integration and a high degree of differentiation from the outgroup. Leading for peace, on the other hand, frequently entails reversing these dynamics because peace leaders appear to favour a certain amount of differentiation from and within their ingroups as well as a certain amount of identification with the outgroups in order to accomplish superordinate goals that transcend the binary divisions of the partisan conflict and open the door to peace. Furthermore, in order to support the delicate intra- and intergroup processes of peacebuilding, the leaders require a kind of political astuteness.[43]

This paper has looked at a few instances of severe political violence between political parties. Differences in political systems and cleavage alignments complicate cross-national comparisons of extreme political polarization leading to violence. What is needed is a political leadership that is suited for reconciliation. On most occasions, political leadership thrives by polarization and is deficient in the reconciliation plank. When people become so divided that there is a "us versus them" mentality among them, democracy is in danger. A wide range of harmful social psychological processes, such as stereotyping, prejudice, in-group favouritism, out-group denigration, and even dehumanisation, may begin once categorical boundaries between "us and them" are drawn. While Bengal and Kerala are known for the relative absence of caste and communal conflict and violence, the same cannot be said about their politics. There has to be a sort of re-socialization or de-schooling in places like Kannur, which cannot be achieved without the collaboration of the political parties.

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Gandhi's Emotive Rhetoric and the Art of Nationalism: Microcosm of National Consciousness through Odia Creative Imagination

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the emotional integration of the Indian population into a unified national identity due to Gandhi's Swaraj initiative. It examines the emergence of national consciousness in Odisha, focusing on the cultural and linguistic moorings of the people. The paper highlights the resilience of local identities within a national narrative, highlighting the catalytic impact of Gandhi's emotive rhetoric. It highlights the evolution of a sense of nationhood amidst colonialism challenges and the resilience of local identities within a national narrative.

Key words: *Gandhism, Nationalism, Narratives, Odia Literature, Regional Literature*

Introduction

THE ESSENCE OF nationalism is captured very succinctly as "loyalty and devotion to a nation" by Merriam-Webster Dictionary and further elucidated as "a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups"[1]. Nationalism " predates nation, in the construction of which a community expends much of its ideological energy."[2] The Frenchman Buchez has remarked, "nationalism means

not only the nation but also something in the virtue of which a nation continues to exist even when it has lost its autonomy." Nationalism as a concept had been prevalent since the Napoleonic wars and was officially recognised by the Academic Francaise in 1835.[3] In the 19th century, nationalism was emerging in the Odia social horizon, even though there was no such land geographically defined as Odisha, as parts of mainland Odisha were scattered between the Bengal Presidency and other provinces. This paper examines the historical context of India's struggle for freedom, focusing on the state of Odisha. It examines Gandhi's nationalist project in the context of Odisha's geographical, linguistic, and cultural identity, highlighting the importance of considering the intersection of geographical, cultural, and ideological boundaries in modern world history.

The role of 'Narratives' in creating identities is vital, whether it be the social, cultural, or national identity. Historical narratives are especially of paramount importance in the assessment of India's identity as a nation, a state as well as the ambiguous position of India under the definition of a nation-state, owing to its immense diversity of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic groups that reside within it, each with its particular historical narrative and myths of origin and their co-existence in its political identity as a State. The administrative unification of these regions and their people into the state of 'India' is understood as an event influenced principally by colonial British rule. Among all the historical forces that brought a united 'India' into existence instead of numerous substates or independent provinces within it, the phenomenon of the Indian struggle for freedom acquires substantial importance.

> On the eve of its Independence from Britain, the country had never before been united under a single civil administration bound together with the vision of a decidedly "Indian" civic and cultural identity.[4]

The Gandhian moment in the history of the Indian nationalist project achieved an unparalleled eminence owing to its all-pervasive character; the Gandhi phenomenon didn't only acquire a space in Indian polity but all aspects of its people's social, cultural, and personal lives. It is due to Gandhi that the polity was no longer an avenue exclusive to the middle-class intelligentsia; instead, it took shape through mass mobilisation with participation from all the classes, which underlies the success of the nationalist project.

> …its success depends significantly on older social systems and networks of communication still accessible to largely illiterate masses; most

effectively through symbols of cultural, quite often religious, meaning and power, and stories often communicated by rumour.[5]

This paper explores the impact of Gandhian political nationalism on Indian English literature, focusing on the state of Odisha. It highlights Gandhi's role in mobilizing the people of Odisha for independence from colonial administration, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between the nation and states. The paper highlights the importance of creative literary practice in constructing a nation, particularly in the context of the Indian Constitution, which views the country as a union of states.

Nationalism, Gandhi, and the Existing Literature:

Narain and Kaushik (1988), in "Charisma, Ideology and Politics: Gandhi in Indo-Anglian Novel", have examined the nature and extent of Gandhi's impact on Indian Politics of nationalism and the politico-aesthetic response of the creative artists to the phenomenon.[6] Another critic, Boparai (1991), in "Bhabani Bhattacharya's Response to British Colonialism in India", has remarked on the fictionalisation of the National movement around the axis of "Gandhism" by prominent writers like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya.[7] Raveendran (1996), in "Nationalism, Colonialism and Indian English Literature", analyses and problematises the historical and ideological problems pertaining to Nationalism inherent in Indian writings in English in a post-colonial light.[8] Saibaba (2008), in his paper "Colonialist Nationalism in the Critical Practice of Indian Writing in English: A Critique", has critiqued how Indian writing in English has been privileged as the representative literature of "Indian nationalist sensibility" over other Indian language literature.[9] In Gandhi's (2019) "A Never Ending Inspiration: Reflection of Gandhian Thoughts in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable and Raja Rao's Kanthapura", she traces the Gandhian influence in the making of Indo-Anglian literature of pre-independence era which was pivotal in the creation of national consciousness.[10] In "Gandhian Philosophy in Indian Literature", Kumar (2021) explores the nascent philosophies of Gandhi in shaping Indian Literature.[11]

Odia Literature and Linguistic Identity of Odisha

Extensive studies have been conducted on the role of Indo-Anglian literature in constructing national identity and sensibilities and the pivotal role Gandhi played in the process. However, the study of the same concerning regional literature is less wide-ranging. Oldest of the eastern group of the Indo-Aryan family, Odia is a language officially

recognised, or "scheduled," in the Indian constitution as the primary language of the Indian state of Odisha. With roots dating back to the 10th century CE, Odia, boasting around 50 million speakers, has achieved the esteemed designation of a "classical language" – the sixth language in the country to receive such status, following Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, as conferred by the Union Cabinet. In the 19th century, even though nationalism was emerging in the Odia social horizon, "Oriya[12] as a language was still faltering to establish itself, and there was no leadership which could take up the cause. Even in the very first Oriya drama, *Babaji*, the writer Jagamohan Lala has made his Oriya Characters speak in Bengalee with their Bengali and in English with their English counterparts."[13] In a 1904 play written by Khadial king Birabikram Deb, entitled *Utkala Durdasha* (The Plight of Utkala), inspired by *Bharat Durdasha* written in Hindi by Bharatendra Harishchandra, a personified dejected Odia language, stabs itself on the order of the British Government.[14] The regional nationalisms were primarily the result of the struggle for a linguistic identity. The separate administrative units that the British had divided India into ultimately fueled the rising linguistic identity and regional nationalism.

Previously, Pati (1983), in his paper "Peasants, Tribals and the National Movement in Orissa[14] (1921-1936)", examined the various national movements in Odisha and the popular responses that converged with them.[15] In "Creativity and the Left Cultural Movement in Orissa", Pati (2012) deals with the Progressive Literary movement of the 1930s developed out of the interaction generated by the power of the militant anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggles in Orissa.[16] Imam (2013), in his paper "Mahatma Gandhi in Popular Imagination: A Study of Literature of the National Movement", has shed light on a new dimension of the history of the Indian national movement, emphasising the cultural aspect, the representation of Gandhi in pamphlets, songs and journal articles.[17] Samantaray and Nayak (2015), in "History of the Progressive Literary Movement in Odisha", focus on the emergence of the Progressive Literary Movement building on the preceding trends in literature.[18] In "Mahatma Gandhi in Odisha", Dash (2019) gives an account of Gandhi's political activity in Odisha and his role in mobilising people from all strata of society.[19]

As inferred from the extensive literature review, there have not been in-depth analyses around the implication of "Gandhism" in Odisha with respect to the national freedom struggle and its materialisation in Odia literature vis-à-vis Odisha's political and linguistic identity. This paper considers the literature of the Odia language as a sample of this study and seeks to locate Odisha in the

national freedom struggle through a study of its active participation in the same, which happened parallelly with the struggle for its own political and linguistic identity, and the role of Gandhi through a review of the literary production of that age.

Gandhi: A Global Phenomenon and his Transcendental Legacy

Numerous studies have demonstrated the contribution Gandhi made to the Indian freedom struggle and various social, political, and economic reforms that came along the way. The paradigm of 'nationalism' in India mainly occupied the political sphere through the efforts of various political leaders and organised political movements with the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi.

> The tempo of political agitation was admirably kept up after the War by Tilak, who emerged from temporary retirement after his release from prison in 1914, rejoined the Congress, and founded the Home Rule League in 1916; and also by Mrs Anne Besant, whose own All India Home Rule League was established in 1917.[20]

A paradigm shift was discernible in the orientation of political nationalism in the early nineteenth century; the social reformers and the educated upper-middle-class had started to project a defensive stance of 'Indianness', which was more cultural in nature as opposed to the staunch political nationalism. Gandhi revolutionised political nationalism into pragmatic proliferation in the social and cultural spheres, which later proved instrumental in realising an Indian national identity. Through the substantial efforts of Gandhiji in the 1920s, the "politico-cultural integration of these two strands of cultural consciousness and traditions of political protest"[21] was brought to fruition.

Following his successful Satyagraha in South Africa and his return in 1915, Gandhi employed his non-violent principle in the Champaran campaign, Kheda Satyagraha, and Ahmedabad labour dispute. His leadership became a pan-India phenomenon, marking the beginning of a new era. Gandhi expanded his political connections through his association with Congress, recognizing the need to address local problems in different regions. His act of gathering help for the famine-stricken people of Odisha in 1920 drew attention and generated goodwill among Odia leaders.

The political agitation following the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919 and Gandhi's call for the first Non-cooperation Movement in 1920 engendered a groundbreaking awakening among the masses, which was unheard of; as a result, Indian nationalism had a

metamorphosis "from a middle-class movement to a mass emotion."[22] The unwavering loyalty of millions of people to a cause that Gandhi had defined for the nation can be attributed to his emotional identification with all classes of people rather than his intellect. The reverence of the masses across the nation for Gandhi as *Bapu* (Father figure) to *Mahatma* (Saint), is a testament to the momentous force of his personality and his infectious charisma. Gandhi's participation in politics and his entry into Congress was merely a first step towards his greater vision for society, his "constructive programme, for which Congress was merely a medium. According to Das, "Gandhi couldn't be bound by Congress even after Congress being the medium for all his political endeavours".[23]

The expansion of 'Gandhism' into all aspects of human life gradually began to reflect itself in the aesthetic sphere. Gandhism, which was no longer confined to the conventional categorisation of mere doctrines, precepts, or gospels, had rather acquired more of a paradigmatic praxis. As it has been maintained, in fiction of a certain age, "we find the closest imitation of men and manners; and are admitted to examine the very web and texture of society, as it really exists".[24] Hence Gandhism, as expected, formed the crux of a host of nationalistic literary creations brought about starting from the 1920s. Literary scholars have termed this era of Indian literature as the Gandhian age. It has been abundantly demonstrated in the whirlwind of nationalistic writings that rose in the early 20th century. In fact, "the works of K.S. Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao would not perhaps have been possible had the miracle that was Gandhi not occurred during this period."[25] Some of the most powerful themes in Indian English fiction emerged during this time; except for the struggles for independence, some of the most commonly explored themes were "the communal issues, the plight of the untouchables, the landless poor, the downtrodden, the economically exploited, and the oppressed."[26]

The Indian English literature of the early 20th century is a manifestation of the Gandhian ideals "symbolised by his action theory of Satya and Ahimsa"[27], apart from its overt implementation in the political sphere. Along with Raja Rao's *Kanthapura,* which is often considered an exemplary fiction of Gandhi's consciousness, other works of fiction depicting India's social life with the then political scene at the backdrop are Dhangopal Mukherjee's (1933) *My Brother's Face*, K.S. Venkatramani's (1927) *Murugan, The Tiller*, Des's *Into The Sun*, Hasan Ali's (1933) *The Changeling*, D.P. Karaka's (1942) *There Lay the City*.

Intersections: Odia Literature and the Gandhian Resonance

A landmark creation in the literary history of Odisha, Fakir Mohan Senapati's *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* rightfully boasts of its status of being the first major phenomenon in the hundred-and-twenty-one-year-old history of Odia novel; however, the full potential of Senapati's novel was yet to be realised, which took place only after the advent of Gandhian and Marxist consciousness in the Odia political scene. In the 1930s, the growing political opposition to colonial authority and a resulting increase in the aesthetic expression of national sensibility, the advent of 'Gandhism' in the Indian writings in English etc., collectively brought about a revitalised perspective of the historical and social forces among the educated mass of Odisha that led to a widespread feeling of resistance against the existing social paradigm. "The Oriyas began to feel the urge to ventilate their feeling through their writings, which were purported to preserve and advance their national life."[28] Having established itself as a separate province in 1936, Odisha had acquired the felicity of aesthetic expression of concurrent social issues contextualised in Odia rural and agrarian life narratives.

Madhusudan Das was the forerunner of the linguistic cause in Odisha, and his "very first endeavour was to bring together all the Oriya-speaking people into an administrative whole by the creation of a separate province uniting all the Oriya-speaking tracts"[29] He wanted to achieve that by founding *Utkala Sammilani* (Utkal Union Conference or U.U.C.), a social and cultural organisation for uplifting Odia language and culture and preventing it from going extinct amid all the conspiracy by the other linguistic groups to extinguish the identity of Odia as an independent language. By focusing too much solely on the regional cause of Odisha, Madhusudan Das "seemed to overlook that Orissa was part of a bigger whole" and became oblivious to the influencing factor of Imperialism.[30]

However, Gopabandhu was the forerunner of the social revolution that Gandhi had envisioned for India in Odisha.[31] Gopabandhu wanted to create a society worthy of human beings, and for the establishment of such a society, he wanted to achieve *Swaraj* (self-governance), not to satisfy his hunger for power.[32] Gopabandhu worked as a link between the Odia nationalistic cause and the all-India problem of struggle for freedom. To him, "the problem of the country - that freeing her from the British bondage - was of prime importance, and he believed that the Oriya cause would be better served by this identification."[33] Speaking at the Utkal Union Conference of 1918, Gopabandhu said, "First and foremost, we are humans; secondly,

Indians; and lastly Odias"[34], a statement that is reminiscent of Gandhi's humanistic thought. Gopabandhu came up with the suggestion to merge U.U.C. into the Indian national movement.

The Satyavadi school, founded by Gopabandhu in 1909, significantly contributed to the Non-Cooperation Movement in Orissa. Just as Gandhi assimilated his social revolution with political freedom, Gopabandhu became the personification of the same in Odisha, assimilating Odia nationalism and the Indian freedom struggle through his Satyavadi school, which was a point of convergence of the social and political philosophy of the cause of Odisha and the freedom struggle. Satyavadi School became a 'national school' after the call for the Non-Cooperation Movement. He published a newspaper called "Seba", inspiring public mobilisation for the Non-cooperation Movement.[35] It introduced a nationalistic trend in Oriya literature and, through the establishment of the Samaj in 1919, sought to imbue the educated segments of society with this patriotic spirit. Gopabandhu established the provincial Congress Committee at Puri in 1920. Through Gopabandhu's association with Congress and the subsequent concern of Congress in the Odisha problem, the Non-cooperation Movement gathered public fervour in Odisha. "Congress' assimilation with U.U.C in the Chakradharpur session ushered in the Non-cooperation Movement into Odisha. Gandhi's support for the Odisha problem garnered public support for him in Odisha, and faith in Congress was generated"[36]. "Gopabandhu's image as a leader soared up after the Chakradharpur session, and he emerged as the unassailable leader of the Oriya people – almost the Gandhi of Orissa."[37]

Gandhi's strategic visit to the province before the Non-Cooperation Movement played a pivotal role, evidenced by the numerous meetings and locations he engaged with. Understanding the context before the movement, including the Khas system of 1893-94, alterations in the state's taxation, rising rentals, and heightened forest cess, reveals the catalysts for the movement, particularly among the marginalised peasants and downtrodden sectors of society. Prior to Gandhi's visit in 1927 to set the stage for the civil disobedience movement, the peasant and tribal uprisings at Bamra and Nilgiri over land rent and at coastal areas over the colonial monopoly of the salt industry had gained momentum. As an offshoot of the civil disobedience movement, it took the form of Forest Satyagraha (1933) in Odisha as another facet.[38]

In the Indian context, a millenarian[39] perspective played a pivotal role in garnering widespread popular support beyond urban centres. In the peasant and tribal movements, this outlook was often fuelled

by rumours and the belief that the prevailing authority framework would disintegrate, giving way to a more equitable one, "proclaiming the coming of Swaraj and "Gandhi Raj" (inspiring forest incursions and nonpayment of taxes) along with crosscommunal unity…".[40] Gandhi employed symbols of religious and cultural importance, both physically and metaphorically, enabling him to tap into the profound spiritual realm. This facilitated his ability to foment public agitation on numerous occasions.

After the civil disobedience movement, political agitation regarding Odisha's geographical boundary became of prime importance. In his 1934 visit, Gandhi sought to pose an alternative to the civil disobedience movement through the social regeneration program advocating for Khadi, Harijan upliftment, and the elimination of untouchability. This was concurrent with a socialist trend in Odia literature, attacking feudal and capitalist exploitation as observed in the writings of the progressive literature. Not only did Indian literature become revolutionary and progressive, influenced by Marxist ideas, but it also became humanistic and realistic, influenced by Gandhi's nonviolent way of resistance.[41]

Along with its part in the national struggle, Odisha, as a provincial state, had its own plights to tend to. Similar to the function of the Indo-Anglian novels of Rao, Narayan, Anand, etc., of disseminating the various dimensions of Gandhian ideals among the common mass, in Odisha, Odia literature and littérateurs took it upon themselves to disseminate the national consciousness as well as distinct cultural and linguistic identity through literature that the people of Odisha would hold to be their own, being able to locate themselves in it. "The novelists in English received their sense of national identity from Gandhi's way of thinking."[42] Their perception of their homeland was not reflected in their elaboration of the ancient Benaras but rather in that of the impoverished slums, as well as in the countless dunghills scattered over the land, as Gandhi depicted Indian villages in their destitution. Hence, it is only natural for the same impact to be reflected in Odia literature, too.

The upsurge in the literary production of Odisha in the three decades preceding the independence is a testimony to literature's vital role. Fiction, more than any other form of literature, concerns itself with social conditions and values; the rise of novels of realism in Victorian English literature due to the Industrial Revolution, changes in social structures and the rise of the middle-class population is a testimony to it. Similarly, the sudden flowering of Indo-Anglian novels in the 1930s to instill in the masses a sense of responsibility and dedication is well-recognised by critics of Indo-Anglian novels.[43] The

same effect is felt in the Odia literary scene when the fiction production is scrutinised for its socio-political condition. From 1878 to 1920, in 40 long years, there were about 20 or 25 novels in Odia. However, from 1920 to 1947, there was an exponential growth in the number of novels published; there came about 250 novels, from which one-third were published in three years, from 1945-47.[44] It was an evident consequence of the literary personalities' preoccupation with politics and contemporary social issues. The writers' motivation for creating art was not limited to merely art's sake; they assumed socio-political reform and moral and ethical significance to be literary imperatives. "…related to an increasing socio-political awareness, and a sharp consciousness about social changes in manners, habits and conviction, and a deepening camaraderie with the downtrodden, poor, and the neglected parts of the society, an increasing desire could be noted among the writers towards greater production of novels."[45]

Owing to the above-mentioned economic conditions, continuous natural calamities, epidemics, the political instability of Odisha as a state throughout the 19th century, and the negligence of successive governments, there was little to no scope for development. Odisha primarily being an agrarian society, these prolonged conditions had become detrimental to Odisha's economy. "General ignorance at the lower rungs of society could not germinate new hope".[46] Gandhi's role in mobilising the downtrodden class of Odisha cannot be denied; his humanistic and religious method of politics based on the concept of *Ahimsa*, *Satyagraha*, Discipline, and Equality resulted in social regeneration as an imperative of national liberation.

> Rural peasants were not always moved to action on the basis of mere economic grievances. Time and time again, their involvement in mass action during the Indian independence movement depended on gaining access to the inner spiritual domain and communication of a sense of the millenarian urgency of the present moment…[47]

Gandhi spent a total of sixty-nine days in Odisha, combining eight of his visits from 1921 to 1946. Among these, his visit in 1934 was of prime importance because of the *Padyatra* (foot-march) he undertook, one of the only two *Padyatras* he took throughout his lifetime. It painted a picture in the popular imagination of Gandhi as a Messiah who undertook a *Dharmayatra* (Spiritual journey) for the emancipation of humanity. The same model of peasant uprising can be demonstrated through Sarkar's analysis of the conditions and nature of subaltern militancy in Bengal, where he highlights the effective combination of economic and religiously oriented factors in creating "the multitude

of mass initiatives in the immediate post[World War I] years…bear[ing] ample witness to the success of the nationalists in breaking through to and effectively mobilising the masses…"[48]

Gopabandhu not only introduced Gandhi to Oriya nationalistic horizons but also introduced him to the Odia literary horizons. Following his lead, Acharya Harihara Dasa kept up the ideals of the Gandhian movement. Birakishore Dasa and Banchhanidhi Mohanty were among the great names who engaged themselves with both Odia literature and the freedom movement.[49] Gopabandhu became the first Odia to have been imprisoned due to his participation in Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. He wrote *Bandi ra Atmakatha* (Soliloquy of a Prisoner) and *Kara Kabita* (The Prison Poems), *Dharmapada, Gomahatmya* (The Glory of the Cow) while imprisoned in Hazaribag Jail. This era of Odia literature is termed the "Satyavadi era" in honour of Gopabandhu and his Satyavadi School. The literary careers of the young intellectuals of the Satyavadi era started with *Mukura* by Barajasundar Das, a literary monthly in the nationalist structure. Gopabandhu understood the importance of the press for effective communication and brought out a journal, "Satyavadi" in 1913, to express his views on Odia nationalism. The weekly "Samaj", which he brought out in 1919 for the dissemination of his political ideas, later became the voice of Congress in Odisha.[50]

In the 1930s, this new political sensibility brought about by Gandhi had such an impact on Odia writers that it was bound to find expression in their literary creations. Books such as *Biplabi Lenin* were published, and thought-provoking essays such as Shyamasundar Mohanty's *Iswarabada* and Ramesh Chandra Mishra's *Byaktigata Sampati O Dharma* attempted to spread this new way of life.[51] "…The Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet Russia, along with new Marxist ideas, had a powerful influence on young minds."[52] Around this time, budding writers like Brundaban Das, Laxmidhar Nayak, Manmohan Mishra, Gokul Mohan Ray Chudamani, and Binod Chandra Nayak introduced this new philosophy to Odia readers through their essays and poems.[53]

In 1935, The *Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad* (The Literary Association of the New Age) rose as a mouthpiece for Eastern Europe's Marxist ideology in Odisha's socio-political sphere. Under the leadership of its founder Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, "a group of politically left-oriented writers" started the periodical *Adhunika* (The Modern) in 1936 "to make literature an agent of revolution and social change."[54] In the words of Ramprasad Singh, one of the leading members of *Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad* and writer, as put forth in his paper *Bartamanara Sahityare Nutan Bhabadharar Abahan* (Welcoming New Ideas in Today's Literature) stating the purpose of the *Sansad*- "If a revolution does

not take place in the realm of ideas of the Odia youth, if strong clashes do not occur in the world of his imagination, then it would not be possible to have any revolution in the field of literature. The experiments that have started in Russia relating to the present and future of mankind, in Oriya literature too, we have to begin the same experiment related to the Orissan part of the same humankind."[55]

The Sabuja Andolan (Green movement) was a literary phenomenon in the 1950s, influenced by Rabindranath Tagore's romantic high spirit and youthful exuberance. Named after Tagore's famous poem, it set the stage for a shift in the literary sphere from mythology and history to humanity, expressing the plight of the downtrodden and oppressed class amidst political and economic changes. As Mohanty (2006) has inferred, "It was a long journey from Radhanath-Madhusudan tradition - a journey which had strong links with the past, and yet looked forward to new dispensation to come in future."[56]

Padmacharan Pattnaik, Lakshmikant Mahapatra, Godabarish Mahapatra, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Baikunthanath Pattanaik, Mayadhara Mansingh, Anant Pattanaik, Sachi Routray are among the illustrious lot in the literary sphere of this age, many of whom have been instrumental in disseminating nationalistic and patriotic sensibilities. Padmacharan Pattnaik, Laxmikant Mohapatra, and Godabaris Mahapatra have been the connecting links between the Satyabadi school and the *Sabujas* (The Greens). Godabaris Mahapatra's representation of Odia's social life, family, and corruption in public life brought much-needed reform to Odia society. Sabat's essays spoke about socialism, religious dogmatism, untouchability, and the unification of Odia-speaking areas. A substantial part of Panigrahi's writings was in light of social consciousness, contemporary social situations, and the distress of the downtrodden, among many others. Panigrahi covers various themes such as the joint family system, postwar social conditions, rural life, Gandhian and Marxist ideologies, and human relationships. Influenced by Gandhi, his writings maintain moral concern and selflessness, depicting the environment and customs of a typical Odia village. Driven by social realism and idealism, Panigrahi's writings are rooted in Marxist concern for the proletariat and Gandhian values.

Like his father, Kantakabi Lakshmikanta, Nityananda Mahapatra wrote with patriotism at the forefront as he appeared in the literary horizons when literature and politics were inseparable. Nityananda joined politics with the aspiration of rehabilitating man in society with his due dignity; however, he later realised literature is a much more effective way to achieve the same. Among the works significantly influenced by and promoting Gandhian principles were Gopinath

Mohanty's *Mati Matala*, *Bundaye Pani, Shiba Bhai*; Nityananda Mahapatra's *Bhanga Haada*, *Hida Maati*, *Jiantaa Manisa*; Ramprasad Singh's *Pujara Bali*, Surendra Mohanty's *Phata Mati*, Kalindi Panigrahi's contributions such as *Matira Manisa* and *Luhara Manisa*.

Conclusion

Despite the belief that colonial rulers have returned and countries in Asia and Africa have gained independence, various forms of colonialism continue to oppress developing nations and minority communities. A paradigm shift in the core concepts of nation, freedom, and independence is needed as the world is heading towards conflagration. Nationalism is an ideological construct that overlaps social, cultural, religious, linguistic, and ethnic identity. The creation of a nation can be analogous to the founding of a community, with historical narratives playing a crucial role in creating a nation and an imagined community.

The transformation of the ideological construct of the "Indian" nation from the state of India was something that owed largely to the efforts of the Indian middle-class intelligentsia. As Tharoor quoted Winston Churchill, regarding India being merely a geographical union of regions, "is no more a single country than the equator,"[57] The Indian National Congress successfully achieved political integration through Western government and institutions, but emotional integration was also influenced by the politico-aesthetic imagination of Indian creative artists. Political groups like the Muslim League, Kisan Sabhas, and Socialist parties formalized their communities based on common origin stories. Narratives play a vital role in imbibing the essence of nationalism in people, and in India, narratives from various languages and cultures have played a significant role in shifting the paradigm of nationalism from political to emotional. However, these narratives have been unexplored due to the dominance of Indo-Anglian writings in Indian literary spheres.

The role of Indo-Anglian literature in creating a national consciousness has been questioned in the post-colonial era, particularly in India. The literature of regional languages, which make up the corpus of Indian literature, is often marginalized compared to Indo-Anglian literature. Despite their authenticity, these regional literatures are considered insignificant without the influence of colonial influences. This paper examines the socio-political milieu of Odisha, focusing on its aesthetic production. The literary proliferation of Odisha is seen as a result of Gandhian and Marxist consciousness in the Odia political scene. The growing opposition to colonial authority and the dawn of "Gandhism" in Indian writings in English led to a widespread

resistance against existing social paradigms. Gandhi's social reconstruction program, advocating for Khadi, Harijan upliftment, and the elimination of untouchability, brought about a socialist trend in Odia literature, attacking feudal and capitalist exploitation. This paper has the potential to broaden the scope of studying regional literature in India and its role in constructing national consciousness.

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Book Reviews

Thomas Weber, *Gandhi's Australia Australia's Gandhi* with a Foreword by Rajmohan Gandhi (Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2024), pp. xvii+318. ISBN978-93-5442-873-9, Price Rs. 1900.

Gandhi had a close nexus with Britain and the US, although he did not visit the latter. His links with some other countries were not at this level. With Australia, he was on somewhat indifferent terms. When a person asked why he did not visit the country, he just retorted 'no thanks.' One reason for this was that it had an exclusively white society, and Gandhi was, of course, a non-white. Australia played a minor role in his writings, most of which were focused on Australian racism. During his struggle for Indian rights in South Africa, he saw Australia's treatment of Asians not merely as racist but even wicked. He had also opposed the export of Indian cows to Australia for slaughter. All these make this book a timely publication on a neglected subject.

However, some individual Australians did interact with Gandhi. Weber points out that C.V. Thornton joined his volunteers during the Salt Satyagraha. While championing British control of India, Arthur H.Blacket, a clergyman, defended Gandhi against his critics. Besides, he said that Gandhi had done more than any other individual in making Jesus Christ known to Indians. Yet another Australian was R.G. Casey, who thought that Gandhi was the most interesting man he had met in India and presented him with superfine Australian merino wool from which a shawl was made. Gandhi was wearing the same shawl when he was assassinated. Weber also gives illustrations of some other Australians who interacted with Gandhi.

Gandhi became known in Australia through news reports. Often, newspapers reproduce stories published in British or Indian press or based on their own reports. These reports were generally pro-British and disparaging to the Indian leaders, including Gandhi. The latter was critical of discrimination against Indians in South Africa. His friends praised him in the press, which was reported in Australia.

Weber points out that during the Khilafat Movement in India, the Australian press variously described him as an extremist leader, violent Hindu, visionary, idealist, etc. The press reported that the superstitious natives regarded him as a person with supernatural powers. He was someone who could inflame city fanatics but was largely ignored by the masses in the countryside. The press saw a pattern in his campaign: he stirred the masses to commence civil disobedience campaigns and insisted that they be non-violent. The masses turned violent, deaths resulted, and the campaign was withdrawn. He took responsibility and fasted in atonement, saying that the country had not achieved the level of non-violence that he had hoped for.

Weber shows that the thirties witnessed a change of sorts. There were many references to Gandhi in the press, most of which were published in 1930. He was sometimes portrayed as a traitor or reactionary, at times as noble but misguided, and at other times as an impractical idealist. In some newspapers, he appeared on the front page. Australian readers were informed that Gandhi was disgusted that he had not been arrested. He was also disappointed because of the lack of hospitality in the villages, and the village headmen who had resigned had applied for reinstatement. However, this was not quite correct. The salt which he produced in Dandi was unfit for human consumption. The Australian press ignored the central act of breaching the laws. Though there was lawlessness, overall, the campaign was fizzling out. His participation in the round table conference did receive attention, but on the whole, he was considered inconsequential. There were some reports that he would retire to the Himalayas to study yoga. Weber quoted these news reports largely without commenting on them.

The beginning of World War II brought Gandhi to the headlines in the Australian papers. There was relief because he seemed to support Britain, but there was also concern about how much this support would go. His advice to let Hitler take over Britain and resist him non-violently was considered preposterous, as was his idea of passive resistance to the Japanese intruders in India. Fears were expressed that he might start another civil disobedience movement. With his arrest, he again faded from the scene. When independence came, he did not participate in its celebrations and tried to bring peace to riot-torn Calcutta. He fasted and brought about peace. All this received the attention of the media.

Weber notes that Gandhi's assassination shocked the Australian press. It lauded him as a saint, detailed his movements, published tributes from world leaders, and was worried about riots in India.

His cremation was described, and editorials and letters of praise became common. There was also a largely attended memorial service in Melbourne Assembly Hall.

Weber then discusses Gandhi-related organizations in Australia. Prominent aid organizations had Gandhian underpinnings. *Peacewards* sympathetically wrote about Gandhi on several occasions. For some student groups, Gandhi provided strategies for non-violence. A radio broadcast mentioned that Gandhi considered the treatment of minorities as the primary test of a civilized society. He was used as a rhetorical tool in environmental campaigns. However, his impact was small. Still, the origins of Oxfam Australia were Gandhi-inspired. He inspired some individuals. A Gandhi-related course was offered by the University of Queensland since the mid-seventies. Many Christian writers and speakers referred to him. Stephen Murphy launched the Gandhian Movement of Australia. Later, he mooted the formation of a worldwide network of Gandhian organizations. A more recent Australian Gandhi-related organization was the International Centre of Nonviolence. Indian and other overseas Gandhian guests come to Australia to lecture on Gandhi. Attenborough's *Gandhi* was placed on the Higher School Certificate syllabus as a reading. Perhaps the most important connection between Gandhi and the Australians in educational settings has happened in universities. He was strongly featured in Indian History and Politics at La Trobe University. While Australian academicians wrote major works on topics of modern Indian history, which Gandhi featured strongly, very few focused specifically on Gandhi himself. The author of the book under review is one of them. They have written several important papers and book chapters on Gandhi, not to forget one by A.L. Basham of *The wonder that was India*-fame. He has also figured in Australian fiction. For the sake of completeness, a reference may also be made to American Pulitzer Prize-winning author Joseph Lelyveld's partial biography of Gandhi, which outraged public opinion in India, leading to demands for its ban.

Finally, the book discusses the Australian public vis-à-vis Gandhi in Australia. Gandhi gave the name of Shantidas to Lanza del Vasto. There have also been exhibitions and statues erected in cities. Since Gandhi's time, Australia has become more tolerant and multilateral. Though public interest in him has been limited, in 1969, his birth centenary was celebrated. One reason for more interest in him is Australia's ever-growing Indian population.

Overall, this book is a painstakingly executed study of a hitherto ignored subject. It extensively uses newspapers and periodicals published in Australia that are not easily available elsewhere. The

conclusions are objective, and Gandhi has been neither deified nor unduly criticized. The book is a valuable addition to Gandhiana.

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Majken Jul Sørensen, Stellan Vinthagen and Jørgen Johansen, *Constructive Resistance: Resisting Injustice by Creating Solutions*, Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023, ISBN: 9781538165393, 219 pages, Price: $US120.

When one thinks about nonviolent activism, the civil disobedience campaigns and the general philosophy of Gandhi readily come to mind. His lesson-rich struggles in South Africa, his three major campaigns in India and his life example can be plumbed for tactical and even strategic insights. This is quite a reasonable way of starting nonviolent action plan coordination. After all, before ditching Gandhi for what he saw as a more pragmatic and political explanation of nonviolence, the doyen of the discipline, Gene Sharp, had started off as a Gandhi enthusiast, analysing some of Gandhi's campaigns in a broader context. Later, for him there was no longer a need to "wield the weapon of moral power", what was important was the ability to politically defeat opponents. But, of course, there is more to nonviolence than the debate of whether it should be political or spiritual – there are other much overlooked aspects that could be considered.

Narayan Desai, the son of Gandhi's chief secretary, noted that there were three gifts that Gandhi gave to humanity and that *Satyagraha*, Gandhi's nonviolent activism, was only one of them. There were also the lessons regarding the type of life that is worth living from the spiritual questing Mahatma and, thirdly, what came to be known as the Constructive Programme.

The Gandhian program, in its original context, dealt mainly with the problems of communal unity and the uplift of the rural masses. It aimed to produce "something beneficial to the community, especially to the poor and unemployed" and provided "the kind of work, which the poor and unemployed can themselves do and thus self-respectingly help themselves."

In situations of social conflict and mass *satyagraha* campaigns, Gandhi made it a point to couple constructive work to civil disobedience, sometimes seeming to say that constructive work was an aid to civil disobedience campaigns and at other times reversing the order of priorities. In fact, he claimed that without the Constructive Programme civil disobedience would "be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon."

For Gandhi this constructive work offered replacement for what activists were opposing at the very time they were opposing it. Without it, because fundamental changes would not have been made, civil disobedience, if it succeeded in overthrowing oppressors, would

merely exchange one group of rulers with another similar group. Gandhi made the point that he was "born for the Constructive Programme. It is part of my soul. Politics is a kind of botheration for me." And further, following pressure to conduct a major campaign, Gandhi noted that "in placing civil disobedience before constructive work I was wrong ... I feared that I should estrange co-workers and so carried on with imperfect Ahimsa [nonviolence]." Gandhi was well aware that political freedom was easier to achieve than economic, social and moral freedom in part because they are "less exciting and not spectacular".

The works on the more spectacular versions of nonviolent activism are plentiful (see in particular Gene Sharp's 1973 tome *The Politics of Nonviolent Activism*), those that examine the role of constructive elements not so (although Danilo Dolci's "strikes in reverse" in the 1950s deserve mention, as do the less constructive examples in James Scott's 1985 book *Weapons of the Weak*). Recently, Mona Lilja's 2021 book *Constructive Resistance*, and Andrew Rigby's 2022 *Sowing the Seeds for the Future* have gone some of the way to conceptualising this different vision of nonviolent activism. With this book, activist academics Majken Jul Sørensen, Stellan Vinthagen and Jørgen Johansen, have provided us with a major and important addition to the nonviolence literature on the constructive, not merely the destructive or coercive, elements of resistance.

Many of the old suppositions about the workings of spectacular versions of nonviolence have finally gained supporting empirical evidence. In their groundbreaking exploration of the strategic effectiveness of violent versus nonviolent resistance, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J.Stephan found that nonviolent resistance has been about twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts.

However, this book argues that a limited Sharpian power breaking approach may bring down a regime, however it does little to consolidate the victory and often new repressive regimes emerge. If power breaking is not combined with other forms of action, it has less chance of success or of lasting success even if it seems to have succeeded in the first instance. The 2011 revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt come to mind. The technique approach championed by Sharp has tended to ignore normative regulation (what was termed the Constructive Programme in Gandhian praxis), however nonviolent struggle need not only be about resisting oppression but also about building new personal habits and social institutions that are needed to form the basis of a new society. As the authors point out, "resistance might tear down what is unjust, although it will not by itself create

justice."

What is this constructive resistance? The term, as used in this book, refers to the way that those working for a more just, sustainable and peaceful future "combine construction and resistance into 'constructive resistance.'" And this happens when "people begin building their ideal societies independently of and in opposition to the dominant structures already in place."

The concept is centred on people who "have started to create in the present some of the elements they think are essential for a better future."

The book illustrates these ideas in action by examining both large and small constructive initiatives that have been taken, or are currently being undertaken, around the world. The case studies include the Norwegian campaign to save the Innerdalen valley from being flooded by a dam, the Transition movement network which operates around the world targeting environmental issues and those of overconsumption, the setting up of women's refuges, the peace movement during the Vietnam War, the various labour movements around the world and the environmental movements that incorporated constructive elements. In short, the authors note that "constructive resistance occurs when people start to build elements of the society they desire independently of and in opposition to structures of power." Examples including a peace community in Colombia during a civil war, a parallel education system set up during nonviolent struggle in Kosovo, Gandhi's khadi campaign during the Indian independence struggle, a housing program for Iran's urban poor, the championing of fairtrade goods, etc. With these examples we can see how diverse the phenomenon can be in terms of context, the number of people involved, and the length of the actions.

However the authors also note that at times constructive initiatives might in fact be the only option when no one else seems to care about a problem, and discuss issues such as symbolism vs. practical effect, independence, co-option, and relationships with established organisations.

This book also goes on to cover cases where the constructive element is strong and the resistance one is weak: for example the United Kingdom's Transition movement and various energy and local currency schemes noting that mere constructive work is not enough, it needs to be "combined with resistance to that which stands in the way of ... new possibilities." In the assessment of the Innerdalen action the tactical use of construction in a campaign is highlighted. In the examination of "unarmed revolutions", cases of strong resistance and weak construction, for example the organisation of free trade unions

in communist Poland, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, the Brazilian landless rural workers movement, and the Zapatista creation of autonomous communities in Mexico are looked at with the conclusion that a weak constructive element may be one of the reasons that changes often did not last long and strong constructive elements often ensured that they did.

Echoing Gandhi, by way of conclusion we are informed that "An integration of construction and resistance can potentially be a powerful tool for individuals, groups, networks, and movements aiming to create long-term and lasting societal change by undermining dominant systems of power" and perhaps even dissolving them.

This is an important book, providing another advance in the analysis of the practical ways nonviolence can work in a constructive way that is longer-term and more subtle than the usual image of nonviolent resistance as demonstration marches or strikes. Gandhi's insights are being taken seriously here and a reconsideration of Gandhi's Constructive Programme and what it implies for new thinking in the strategy of nonviolence is provided.

However, this book is an academic work and, while a cheaper eBook is available, highly priced. Although the authors convincingly argue that activists who "manage to creatively combine active resistance with constructive work are more likely to achieve more durable and far-reaching results", the format of the book will mean that it will be quoted in learned articles but less likely to be read by those on the ground working towards long term equitable nonviolent futures. The back cover summary of the argument of the book states that it will be of interest to students and practitioners of resistance. As it stands it is more likely to come to the notice of students rather than practitioners. The inspiring message of this book should also be circulated in a stripped-down version with less repetition, less detailed case studies in a more accessible iteration that would give inspiration to the practitioners of constructive resistance in the formulation of their praxis.

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Information for Authors

Gandhi Marg is the premier quarterly journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation having a standing of more than half a century published from New Delhi in the months of March, June, September and December every year. Original contributions on themes of national and international importance falling under the broad area of Gandhian Studies are invited from scholars and practitioners. Articles submitted to Gandhi Marg are refereed. It is presumed that an article submitted to Gandhi Marg is original, and has not been under the consideration of any other journal. In general, the articles should not exceed 8000 words including notes and references. Periodically, we also bring out special issues on selected themes.

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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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